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HOMŒÓPATHY,

AND ITS KINDRED DELUSIONS ;

TWO LECTURES

DELIVERED BEFORE THE BOSTON SOCIETY FOR THE
DIFFUSION OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

BY

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Καπνου σκιᾶς ὄναρ.

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## PREFACE.

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WHEN a physician attempts to convince a person who has fallen into the Homœopathic delusion, of the emptiness of its pretensions, he is often answered by a statement of cases in which its practitioners are thought to have effected wonderful cures. The main object of the first of these Lectures, is to show by abundant *facts*, that such statements, made by persons unacquainted with the fluctuations of disease and the fallacies of observation, are to be considered in general as of little or no value in establishing the truth of a medical doctrine, or the utility of a method of practice.

Those kind friends who suggest to a person suffering from a tedious complaint, that he "had better try Homœopathy," are apt to enforce their suggestion by adding, that "at any rate it can do no harm." This may or may not be true as regards the individual. But it always does very great harm to the community to encourage ignorance, error



or deception, in a profession that deals with the life and health of our fellow-creatures. Whether or not those who countenance Homœopathy are guilty of this injustice towards others, the second of these Lectures may afford them some means of determining.

To deny that good effects may happen from the observance of diet and regimen when prescribed by Homœopaths as well as by others, would be very unfair to them. But to suppose that men with minds so constituted as to accept such statements and embrace such doctrines as make up the so-called science of Homœopathy, are more competent than others to regulate the circumstances which influence the human body in health and disease, would be judging very harshly the average capacity of ordinary practitioners.

To deny that some patients may have been actually benefited through the influence exerted upon their imaginations, would be to refuse to Homœopathy what all are willing to concede to every one of those numerous modes of practice known to all intelligent persons by an opprobrious title. So long as the body is affected through the mind, no audacious device, even of the most manifestly dishonest character, can fail of producing occasional good to those who yield it an implicit or even a partial faith. The argument founded on this occasional good, would be as applicable in justifying the counterfeiter and giving circulation to his base coin, on the ground that a spurious dollar had often relieved a poor man's necessities.



Homœopathy has come before our public at a period when the growing spirit of eclecticism has prepared many ingenious and honest minds to listen to all new doctrines with a candor liable to degenerate into weakness. It is not impossible that the pretended evolution of great and mysterious virtues from infinitely attenuated atoms, may have enticed a few over-refining philosophers, who have slid into a vague belief that matter subdivided grows less material, and approaches nearer to a spiritual nature as it requires a more powerful microscope for its detection.

However this may be, some persons seem disposed to take the ground of Menzel, that the Laity must pass formal judgment between the Physician and the Homœopathist, as it once did between Luther and the Romanists. The practitioner and the scholar must not therefore smile at the amount of time and labor expended in these Lectures upon this shadowy system ; which, in the calm and serious judgment of many of the wisest members of the medical profession, is not entitled by any thing it has ever said or done to the notoriety of a public rebuke, still less to the honors of critical martyrdom.

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#### ERRATA.

Page 3d, 5th line, *for* Smithens, *read* Smitheus.

“ 4th, line 29th, *for* man, *read* surgeon.

“ 7th, line 27th, *for* other, *read* two former.



LECTURES.





## LECTURES.

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ASTROLOGY and Alchemy, which came under our notice on a former occasion, were seen to be marked by many common characters, which, if embraced in a single sentence, may stand as a general formula for the whole tribe of the pseudo-sciences.

A theory was gratuitously assumed; "FACTS" were brought forward to sustain it, numerous, seemingly well authenticated, but untrue, or misapplied; the phenomena of nature were misinterpreted; the constant failures of honest experimenters or observers, were accounted for by a self adjusting system of subterfuges; both falsified the history of the past to gain the credit of antiquity; both violated the rules of common sense to involve their doctrines in impressive mystery; and yet volumes, alike unnumbered and unmeaning, were written upon both subjects, men of learning accepted their pretensions, shrewder, if not wiser rogues employed their artifices for a livelihood, and their coffers ran over with the rich man's gold and the poor man's silver; because they both held out such glittering objects, that the weakness of human nature yearned to believe them true.

I have selected four topics for this lecture, the first three of which I shall touch but slightly, the last more fully. They are

1. The Royal cure of the King's Evil, or Scrofula.
2. The Weapon Ointment, and its twin absurdity, the Sympathetic Powder.
3. The Tar-water mania of Bishop Berkeley.
4. The History of the Metallic Tractors, or Perkinism.

The *two first* illustrate the ease with which numerous *facts* are accumulated to prove the most fanciful and senseless extravagances.

The *third*, exhibits the entire insufficiency of exalted wisdom, immaculate honesty, and vast general acquirements to make a good physician of a great bishop.

The *fourth* shows us the intimate machinery of an extinct delusion, which flourished only forty years ago; drawn in all its details, as being a rich and comparatively recent illustration of the pretensions, the arguments, the patronage, by means of which, windy errors have long been, and will long continue to be swollen into transient consequence. All display in superfluous abundance, the boundless credulity and excitability of mankind upon subjects connected with medicine.

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From the time of Edward the Conqueror to Queen Anne, the monarchs of England were in the habit of touching those who were brought to them suffering with the scrofula, for the cure of that distemper. William the Third had good sense enough to discontinue the practice, but Anne resumed it, and among her other patients, performed the royal operation upon a child, who, in spite of his disease, grew up at last into Samuel Johnson. After laying his hand upon the sufferers, it was customary for the monarch to hang a gold piece around the neck of each patient. Very strict precautions were adopted to prevent those who thought more of the golden angel hung round the neck by a white riband, than of relief for their bodily infirmities, from making too many calls, as they sometimes attempted. "According to the statement of the advocates and contemporaries of this remedy, none ever failed of receiving benefit unless their little faith and credulity starved their merits. Some are said to have been cured immediately on the very touch, others did not so easily get rid of their swellings, until they were touched a second time. Several cases are related, of persons who had been blind for several weeks, and months, and obliged even to be led to Whitehall, yet recovered their sight immediately upon being touched, so as to walk away without any guide."\*

So widely, at one period, was the belief diffused, that in the course of twelve years, nearly a hundred thousand persons were touched by Charles the Second. Catholic divines, in disputes upon the orthodoxy of their church, did not deny

\*Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal, Vol. III. p. 103.

that the power had descended to protestant princes;—Dr. Harpsfield, in his Ecclesiastical History of England admitted it, and in Wiseman's words, "when Bishop *Tooker* would make use of this argument to prove the truth of our church, *Smithens* doth not thereupon go about to deny the matter of fact; nay, both he and Cope acknowledge it." "I myself," says Wiseman, the best English surgical writer of his day,— "I myself have been a frequent witness of many hundreds of cures performed by his majesty's touch alone, without any assistance of chirurgery; and those many of them such as had tired out the endeavors of able chirurgeons before they came hither. It were endless to recite what I myself have seen, and what I have received acknowledgments of by letter, not only from the several parts of this nation, but also from Ireland, Scotland, Jersey and Guernsey. It is needless also to remember what miracles of this nature were performed by the very blood of his late Majesty of blessed memory, after whose decollation by the inhuman barbarity of the regicides, the relics of that were gathered on chips and in handkerchiefs by the pious devotes, who could not but think so great a suffering in so honorable and pious a cause, would be attended by a more than ordinary assistance of God, and some more than ordinary miracle: nor did their faith deceive them in that point, there being so many hundred that found the benefit of it."

Obstinate and incredulous men, as he tells us, accounted for these cures in three ways; by the journey and change of air the patients obtained in coming to London; by the influence of imagination; and the wearing of gold.

To these objections he answers, 1st, that many of those cured were inhabitants of the city. 2d, that the subjects of treatment were frequently infants. 3d, that sometimes silver was given, and sometimes nothing, yet the patients were cured.

A superstition resembling this probably exists at the present time in some ignorant districts of England and this country. A writer in a Medical Journal in the year 1807, speaks of a farmer in Devonshire, who being a ninth son of a ninth son, is thought endowed with healing powers like those of ancient royalty,—and who is accustomed one day in every week, to *strike for the evil*.

I remember one of my schoolmates telling me, when a boy, of a seventh son of a seventh son, somewhere in Essex county, who touched for the scrofula, and who used to hang

a silver fourpence halfpenny about the neck of those who came to him, which fourpence halfpenny it was solemnly affirmed became of a remarkably black color after having been sometime worn, and that his own brother had been subjected to this extraordinary treatment; but I must add that my schoolmate drew a bow of remarkable length, strength and toughness for his tender years.

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One of the most curious examples of the fallacy of popular belief and the uncertainty of asserted facts in medical experience, is to be found in the history of the **UNGUENTUM ARMARIUM, or WEAPON OINTMENT.**

Fabricius Hildanus, whose name is familiar to every surgical scholar, and Lord Bacon, who frequently dipped a little into medicine, are my principal authorities for the few circumstances I shall mention regarding it. The Weapon Ointment was a preparation used for the healing of wounds, but instead of its being applied to them, the injured part was washed and bandaged, and the weapon with which the wound was inflicted, was carefully anointed with the unguent. Empirics, ignorant barbers, and men of that sort, are said to have especially employed it. Still there were not wanting some among the more respectable members of the medical profession, who supported its claims. The composition of this ointment was complicated, in the different formulæ given by different authorities; but some substances addressed to the imagination, rather than the wound or weapon, entered into all. Such were portions of mummy, of human blood, and of moss from the skull of a thief hung in chains.

Hildanus was a wise and learned man, perhaps the most so of his time. He was fully aware that a part of the real secret of the Unguentum Armarium consisted in the washing and bandaging the wound and then letting it alone. But he could not resist the solemn assertions respecting its efficacy; he gave way before the outcry of *facts*, and therefore instead of denying all their pretensions, he admitted and tried to account for them upon supernatural grounds. As the virtue of such applications, he says, as are made to the weapon cannot reach the wound, and as it can produce no effect without contact, it follows, of necessity, that the devil must have a hand in it; and as he is by far the most long-headed and experienced of practitioners, he cannot find this a matter of any great difficulty. Hildanus himself reports, in detail, the case of a lady who had



received a moderate wound, for which the Unguentum Armarium was employed without the slightest use. Yet instead of receiving this flat case of failure as any evidence against the remedy, he accounts for its not succeeding by the devout character of the lady, and her freedom from that superstitious and over-imaginative tendency which the devil requires in those who are to be benefited by his devices.

Lord Bacon speaks of the Weapon Ointment, in his Natural History, as having in its favor the testimony of men of credit, though, in his own language, he himself "as yet is not fully inclined to believe it." His remarks upon the asserted facts respecting it, shew a mixture of wise suspicion and partial belief. He does not like the precise directions given as to the circumstances under which the animals from which some of the materials were obtained, were to be killed; for he thought it looked like a provision for an excuse in case of failure, by laying the fault to the omission of some of these circumstances. But he likes well that "they do not observe the confecting of the Ointment under any certain *constellation*; which is commonly the excuse of *magical medicines*, when they fail, that they were not made under a fit figure of heaven."\* It was pretended that if the offending weapon could not be had, it would serve the purpose to anoint a wooden one made like it. "This," says Bacon, "I should doubt to be a device to keep this strange form of cure in request and use; because many times you cannot come by the weapon itself." And in closing his remarks on the statements of the advocates of the ointment, he says, "Lastly, it will cure a beast as well as a man, which I like best of all the rest, because it subjecteth the matter to an easy trial." It is worth remembering, that more than two hundred years ago, when an absurd and fantastic remedy was asserted to possess wonderful power, and when sensible persons ascribed its pretended influence to imagination, it was boldly answered that the cure took place even when the wounded party did not know of the application made to the weapon, even when a brute animal was the subject of the experiment, and that this assertion, lie as we all know it was, came in such a shape as to shake the incredulity of the keenest thinker of his time. The very same

\* This was a mistake, however, since the two recipes given by Hil-danus are both very explicit as to the aspect of the heavens required for different stages of the process.

assertion has been since repeated in favor of Perkinism, and since that of Homœopathy.

The same essential idea as that of the Weapon Ointment reproduced itself in the still more famous SYMPATHETIC POWDER. This Powder was said to have the faculty, if applied to the blood-stained garments of a wounded person, to cure his injuries, even though he were at a great distance at the time. A friar returning from the East, brought the recipe to Europe somewhat before the middle of the 17th century. The grand duke of Florence, in which city the friar was residing, heard of his cures, and tried, but without success, to obtain his secret. Sir Kenelm Digby, an Englishman well known to fame, was fortunate enough to do him a favor, which wrought upon his feelings and induced him to impart to his benefactor the composition of his extraordinary Powder. This English knight was at different periods of his life, an admiral, a theologian, a critic, a metaphysician, a politician, and a disciple of Alchemy. As it is not unfrequent with versatile and inflammable people, he caught fire at the first spark of a new medical discovery, and no sooner got home to England than he began to spread the conflagration.

“An opportunity soon offered itself to try the powers of the famous Powder. Mr. J. Howel, having been wounded in endeavoring to part two of his friends who were fighting a duel, submitted himself to a trial of the Sympathetic Powder. Four days after he received his wounds, Sir Kenelm dipped one of Mr. Howel’s garters in a solution of the Powder, and immediately, it is said, the wounds, which were very painful, grew easy, although the patient, who was conversing in a corner of the chamber, had not the least idea of what was doing with his garter. He then returned home, leaving his garter in the hands of Sir Kenelm, who had hung it up to dry, when Mr. Howel sent his servant in a great hurry to tell him that his wounds were paining him horribly; the garter was therefore replaced in the solution of the Powder, and the patient got well after five or six days of its continued immersion.”

“King James First, his son Charles the First, the Duke of Buckingham, then prime minister, and all the principal personages of the time were cognizant of this fact; and James himself being curious to know the secret of this remedy, asked it of Sir Kenelm, who revealed it to him, and his

majesty had the opportunity of making several trials of its efficacy, which all succeeded in a surprising manner." \*

The king's physician, Dr. Mayenne, was made master of the secret, which he carried to France and communicated to the Duke of Mayenne, who performed many cures by means of it, and taught it to his surgeon, who, after the duke's death, sold it to many distinguished persons, by whose agency it soon ceased to be a secret. What was this wonderful substance that so astonished kings, princes, dukes, knights, and doctors? Nothing but powdered blue vitriol. But it was made to undergo several processes that conferred on it extraordinary virtues. Twice or thrice it was to be dissolved, filtered and crystallized. The crystals were to be laid in the sun during the months of June, July and August, taking care to turn them carefully that all should be exposed. Then they were to be powdered, triturated, and again exposed to the sun, again reduced to a very fine powder, and secured in a vessel while hot from the sunshine. If there seems any thing remarkable in the fact of such astonishing properties being developed by this process, it must be from our short-sightedness, for common salt and charcoal develop powers quite as marvellous after a certain number of thumps, stirs and shakes, from the hands of modern workers of miracles. In fact the Unguentum Armarium and Sympathetic Powder resemble some more recent prescriptions; the latter consisting in an infinite dilution of the common dose in which remedies are given, and the other in an infinite dilution of the common distance at which they are applied.

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Whether philosophers, and more especially metaphysicians, have any peculiar tendency to dabble in drugs and dose themselves with physic, is a question that might suggest itself to the reader of their biographies.

When Bishop Berkeley visited the illustrious Malebranche at Paris, he found him in his cell, cooking in a small pipkin a medicine for an inflammation of the lungs from which he was suffering; and the disease being unfortunately aggravated by the vehemence of their discussion, or the contents of the pipkin, carried him off in the course of a few days. Berkeley himself afforded a remarkable illustration of a truth

\* Dict. des Sciences Médicales.

which has long been known to the members of one of the learned professions, namely, that no amount of talent or of acquirements in other departments, can rescue from lamentable folly those who, without something of the requisite preparation, undertake to experiment with nostrums upon themselves and their neighbors. The exalted character of Berkeley is thus drawn by Sir James Mackintosh: "Ancient learning, exact science, polished society, modern literature, and the fine arts, contributed to adorn and enrich the mind of this accomplished man. All his contemporaries agreed with the satirist in ascribing

‘To Berkeley every virtue under heaven.’

"Even the discerning, fastidious and turbulent Atterbury said, after an interview with him, ‘So much understanding, so much knowledge, so much innocence, and such humility, I did not think had been the portion of any but angels, till I saw this gentleman.’"

But among the writings of this great and good man is an Essay of the most curious character, illustrating his weakness upon the point in question, and entitled, "Siris, a Chain of Philosophical Reflexions and Inquiries concerning the virtues of TAR WATER, and divers other Subjects," — an essay which begins with a recipe for his favorite fluid, and slides by gentle gradations into an examination of the sublimest doctrines of Plato. To shew how far a man of honesty and benevolence, and with a mind of singular acuteness and depth, may be run away with by a favorite notion on a subject his habits and education do not fit him to investigate, I shall give a short account of this Essay, merely stating that as all the supposed virtues of Tar Water, made public in successive editions of his treatise by so illustrious an author, have not saved it from neglect and disgrace, it may be fairly assumed that they were mainly imaginary.

The bishop, as is usual in such cases, speaks of himself as indispensably obliged by the duty he owes to mankind, to make his experience public. Now, this was by no means evident, nor does it follow in general that because a man has formed a favorable opinion of a person or a thing he has not the proper means of thoroughly understanding, he shall be bound to print it and thus give currency to his impressions, which may be erroneous and therefore injurious. He would have done much better to have laid his impressions before



some experienced physicians and surgeons, such as Dr. Mead and Mr. Cheselden, to have asked them to try his experiment over again, and have been guided by their answers. But the good bishop got excited; he pleased himself with the thought that he had discovered a great panacea; and having once tasted the bewitching cup of self-quackery, like many before and since his time, he was so infatuated with the draught, that he would insist on pouring it down the throats of his neighbors and all mankind. The precious fluid was made by stirring a gallon of water with a quart of tar, leaving it forty-eight hours, and pouring off the clear water. Such was the specific which the great metaphysician recommended for averting and curing all manner of diseases. It was, if he might be believed, a preventive of the small pox, and of great use in the course of the disease. It was a cure for impurities of the blood, coughs, pleurisy, peripneumony, erysipelas, asthma, indigestion, cachexia, hysterics, dropsy, mortification, scurvy, and hypochondria. It was of great use in gout and fevers, and was an excellent preservative of the teeth and gums; answered all the purpose of Elixir Proprietatis, Stoughton's drops, diet drinks, and mineral waters; was particularly to be recommended to sea-faring persons, ladies, and men of studious and sedentary lives; could never be taken too long, but, on the contrary, produced advantages which sometimes did not begin to show themselves for two or three months.

"From my representing Tar Water as good for so many things," says Berkeley, "some perhaps may conclude it is good for nothing. But charity obligeth me to say what I know, and what I think, howsoever it may be taken. Men may censure and object as they please, but I appeal to time and experiment. Effects misimputed, cases wrong told, circumstances overlooked, perhaps, too, prejudices and partialities against truth, may for a time prevail and keep her at the bottom of her well, from whence nevertheless she emergeth sooner or later, and strikes the eyes of all who do not keep them shut." I cannot resist the temptation of illustrating the bishop's belief in the wonderful powers of his remedy, by a few sentences from different parts of his essay. "The hardness of stubbed vulgar constitutions renders them insensible of a thousand things that fret and gall those delicate people, who, as if their skin was peeled off, feel to the quick every thing that touches them. The tender nerves and low spirits of such poor creatures, would be much relieved by

the use of Tar Water, which might prolong and cheer their lives." "It [the Tar Water] may be made stronger for brute beasts, as horses, in whose disorders I have found it very useful." "This same water will also give charitable relief to the ladies, who often want it more than the parish poor; being many of them never able to make a good meal, and sitting pale, puny and forbidden, like ghosts, at their own table, victims of vapors and indigestion." It does not appear among the virtues of Tar Water that "children cried for it," as for some of our modern remedies, but the bishop says, "I have known children take it for above six months together with great benefit and without any inconvenience; and after long and repeated experience I do esteem it a most excellent diet drink, fitted to all seasons and ages." After mentioning its usefulness in febrile complaints, he says: "I have had all this confirmed by my own experience in the late sickly season of the year one thousand seven hundred and forty-one, having had twenty-five fevers in my own family cured by this medicinal water, drunk copiously." And to finish these extracts with a most important suggestion for the improvement of the British nation — "It is much to be lamented that our Insulars, who act and think so much for themselves, should yet, from grossness of air and diet, grow stupid or doat sooner than other people, who, by virtue of elastic air, water-drinking, and light food, preserve their faculties to extreme old age; an advantage which may perhaps be approached, if not equalled, even in these regions, by Tar Water, temperance, and early hours."

Berkeley died at the age of about seventy; he might have lived longer, but his fatal illness was so sudden that there was not time enough to stir up a quart of the panacea. He was an illustrious man, but he held two very odd opinions; that tar water was every thing, and that the whole material universe was nothing.

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Most of those present have at some time in their lives heard mention made of the METALLIC TRACTORS, invented by one Dr. Perkins, an American, and formerly enjoying great repute for the cure of various diseases. Many have seen or heard of a satirical poem written by one of our own countrymen also, about forty years since, and called "Terrible Tractoration." The Metallic Tractors are now so utterly abandoned, that I have only by good fortune fallen upon a single one of a pair, to show for the sake of illustration. For more than

thirty years this great discovery, which was to banish at least half the evils which afflict humanity, has been sleeping undisturbed in the grave of oblivion. Not a voice has, for this long period, been raised in its favor; its noble and learned patrons, its public institutions, its eloquent advocates, its brilliant promises are all covered with the dust of silent neglect, and of the generation that has sprung up since the period when it flourished, very few know anything of its history, and hardly even the title which in its palmy days it bore, of PERKINISM. Taking it as settled, then, as no one appears to answer for it, that Perkinism is entirely dead and gone, that both in public and private, officially and individually, its former adherents even, allow it to be absolutely defunct, I select it for anatomical examination. If this pretended discovery was made public; if it was long kept before the public; if it was addressed to the people of different countries; if it was formally investigated by scientific men, and systematically adopted by benevolent persons, who did everything in their power to diffuse the knowledge and practice of it; if various collateral motives, as interest and vanity were embarked in its cause; if, notwithstanding all these things, it gradually sickened and died; then the conclusion seems a fair one, that it did not deserve to live. Contrasting its failure with its high pretensions, it is fair to call it an imposition; whether an express fraudulent contrivance or not, some might be ready to question. Every thing historically shown to have happened concerning the mode of promulgation, the wide diffusion, the apparent success of this delusion, the respectability and enthusiasm of its advocates, is of great interest in showing to what extent and by what means a considerable part of the community may be led into the belief of that which is to be eventually considered as an idle folly. If there is any existing folly, fraudulent or innocent in its origin, which appeals to certain arguments for its support; provided that the very same arguments can be shown to have been used for Perkinism with as good reason, they will at once fall to the ground. Still more, if it shall appear that the general course of any existing delusion bears a strong resemblance to that of Perkinism, that the former is most frequently advocated by the same class of persons who were conspicuous in behalf of the latter, and treated with contempt or opposed by the same kind of persons who thus treated Perkinism; if the facts in favor of both have a similar aspect; if the motives of

their originators and propagators may be presumed to have been similar ; then there is every reason to suppose that the existing folly will follow in the footsteps of the past, and after displaying a given amount of cunning and credulity in those deceiving and deceived, will drop from the public view like a fruit that has ripened into spontaneous rottenness, and be succeeded by the fresh bloom of some other delusion required by the same excitable portion of the community.

Dr. Elisha Perkins was born at Norwich, Connecticut, in the year 1740. He had practised his profession with a good local reputation for many years, when he fell upon a course of experiments, as it is related, which led to his great discovery. He conceived the idea that metallic substances might have the effect of removing diseases, if applied in a certain manner ; a notion probably suggested by the then recent experiments of Galvani, in which muscular contractions were found to be produced by the contact of two metals with the living fibre. It was in 1796 that his discovery was promulgated in the shape of the *Metallic Tractors*, two pieces of metal, one apparently iron and the other brass, about three inches long, blunt at one end and pointed at the other. These instruments were applied for the cure of different complaints, as rheumatism, local pains, inflammations and even tumors, by drawing them over the affected part very lightly for about twenty minutes. Dr. Perkins took out a patent for his discovery, and travelled about the country to diffuse the new practice. He soon found numerous advocates of his discovery, many of them of high standing and influence. In the year 1798, the tractors had crossed the Atlantic, and were publicly employed in the Royal Hospital at Copenhagen. About the same time the son of the inventor, Mr. Benjamin Douglass Perkins, carried them to London, where they soon attracted attention. The Danish physicians published an account of their cases, containing numerous instances of alleged success, in a respectable octavo volume. In the year 1804, an establishment honored with the name of the Perkin-ean Institution, was founded in London. The transactions of this institution were published in pamphlets, the Perkin-ean society had public dinners at the Crown and Anchor, and a poet celebrated their medical triumph in strains like these ;

“ See, *pointed metals*, blest with power t’appease  
The ruthless rage of merciless disease,  
O’er the frail part a subtile fluid pour,



Drenched with invisible Galvanic shower,  
Till the arthritic staff and crutch forego,  
And leap exulting like the bounding roe ! ”

While all these things were going on, Mr. Benjamin Douglass Perkins was calmly pocketing money, so that after some half a dozen years, he left the country with more than ten thousand pounds, which had been paid him by the believers in Great Britain. But in spite of all this success, and the number of those interested and committed in its behalf, Perkinism soon began to decline, and in 1811 the Tractors are spoken of by an intelligent writer as being almost forgotten. Such was the origin and duration of this doctrine and practice, into the history of which we will now look a little more narrowly.

Let us see, then, by whose agency this delusion was established and kept up ; whether it was principally by those who were accustomed to medical pursuits, or those whose habits and modes of reasoning were different ; whether it was with the approbation of those learned bodies usually supposed to take an interest in scientific discoveries, or only of individuals whose claims to distinction were founded upon their position in society, or political station, or literary eminence ; whether the judicious or excitable classes gave most deeply into it ; whether, in short, the scientific men of that time were deceived, or only intruded upon, and shouted down for the moment by persons who had no particular call to invade their precincts.

Not much, perhaps, was to be expected of the Medical Profession in the way of encouragement. One Dr. Fuller, who wrote in England, himself a Perkinist, thus expressed his opinion ; “ It must be an *extraordinary* exertion of virtue and humanity for a medical man, whose livelihood depends either on the sale of drugs, or on receiving a guinea for writing a prescription, which must relate to those drugs, to say to his patient ‘ You had better purchase a set of Tractors to keep in your family ; they will cure you without the expense of my attendance, or the danger of the common medical practice.’ For very obvious reasons medical men must *never* be expected to recommend the use of Perkinism. The Tractors must trust for their patronage to the enlightened and philanthropic out of the profession, or to medical men retired from practice, and who know of no other *interest* than the luxury of relieving the distressed. And I do not despair of

seeing the day, when but very few of this description as well as private families will be without them."

Whether the motives assigned by this medical man to his professional brethren existed or not, it is true that Dr. Perkins did not gain a great deal at their hands. The Connecticut Medical Society expelled him in 1797 for violating their law against the use of *nostrums*, or secret remedies. The leading English physicians appear to have looked on with singular apathy or contempt at the miracles, which it was pretended were enacting in the hands of the apostles of the new practice. In looking over the reviews of the time, I have found little beyond brief occasional notices of their pretensions; the columns of these journals being occupied with subjects of more permanent interest. The state of things in London is best learned, however, from the satirical poem to which I have already alluded as having been written at the period referred to. This was entitled, "Terrible Tractoration!! A Poetical Petition against Galvanizing Trumpery and the Perkinistic Institution. Most respectfully addressed to the Royal College of Physicians, by Christopher Caustic, M. D., LL. D., A. S. S., Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, Aberdeen, and honorary member of no less than nineteen very learned societies." Two editions of this work were published in London in the years 1803 and 1804, and one or two have been published in this country.

"Terrible Tractoration" is supposed, by those who never read it, to be a satire upon the follies of Perkins and his followers. It is on the contrary, a most zealous defence of Perkinism, and a fierce attack upon its opponents, most especially upon such of the medical profession as treated the subject with neglect or ridicule. The Royal College of Physicians was the more peculiar object of the attack, but with this body, the editors of some of the leading periodicals, and several physicians distinguished at that time, and even now remembered for their services to science and humanity, were involved in unsparing denunciations. The work is by no means of the simply humorous character it might be supposed, but is overloaded with notes of the most seriously polemical nature. Much of the history of the subject, indeed, is to be looked for in this volume.

It appears from this work, that the principal members of the medical profession, so far from hailing Mr. Benjamin Douglass Perkins as another Harvey or Jenner, turned the coldest

possible of shoulders upon him and his Tractors ; and it is now evident that though they were much abused for so doing, they knew very well what they had to deal with, and were altogether in the right. The delusion at last attracted such an amount of attention as to induce Dr. Haygarth and some others of respectable standing, to institute some experiments which I shall mention in their proper place, the result of which might have seemed sufficient to show the emptiness of the whole contrivance.

The Royal Society, that learned body which for ages has constituted the best tribunal that Britain can appeal to in questions of science, accepted Mr. Perkins's Tractors and the book written about them, passed the customary vote of thanks, and never thought of troubling itself further in the investigation of pretensions of such an aspect. It is not to be denied that a considerable number of physicians did avow themselves advocates of the new practice ; out of the whole catalogue of those who were publicly proclaimed as such, no one has ever been known, so far as I am aware, to the scientific world, except in connection with the short lived notoriety of Perkinism. Who were the persons, then, to whose activity, influence, or standing with the community was owing all the temporary excitement produced by the Metallic Tractors ?

First, those persons who had been induced to purchase a pair of Tractors. These little bits of brass and iron, the intrinsic value of which might, perhaps, amount to ninepence, were sold at five guineas a pair ! A man who has paid twenty-five dollars for his whistle is apt to blow it louder and longer than other people. So it appeared that when the "Perkinian Society" applied to the possessors of Tractors in the metropolis to concur in the establishment of a public institution for the use of these instruments upon the poor, "it was found that only five out of above a hundred objected to subscribe, on account of their want of confidence in the efficacy of the practice, and these," the committee observes, "there is reason to believe, never gave them a fair trial, probably never used them in more than one case, and that perhaps a case in which the Tractors have never been recommended as service able." "Purchasers of the Tractors," said one of their ardent advocates, "would be among the last to approve of them if they had reason to suppose themselves defrauded of five guineas." He forgot poor Moses, with his "gross of green spectacles, with silver rims and shagreen cases." "Dear mother," cried

the boy, "why won't you listen to reason? I had them a dead bargain, or I should not have bought them. The silver rims alone will sell for double the money."

But it is an undeniable fact, that many persons of considerable standing, and in some instances, holding the most elevated positions in society, openly patronized the new practice. In a translation of a work entitled "Experiments with the Metallic Tractors," originally published in Danish, thence rendered successively into German and English, Mr. Benjamin Perkins, who edited the English edition, has given a copious enumeration of the distinguished individuals both in America and Europe, whose patronage he enjoyed. He goes so far as to signify that ROYALTY itself was to be included among the number. When the Perkinian Institution was founded, no less a person than Lord Rivers was elected president, and eleven other individuals of distinction, among them Governor Franklin, son of Dr. Franklin, figured as Vice Presidents. Lord Henniker, a member of the Royal Society, who is spoken of as a man of judgment and talents, condescended to patronize the astonishing discovery, and at different times bought three pairs of Tractors. When the Tractors were introduced into Europe, a large number of testimonials accompanied them from various distinguished characters in America, the list of whom is given in the translation of the Danish work referred to, as follows, "Those who have individually stated cases, or who have presented their names to the public as men who approved of this remedy, and acknowledged themselves instrumental in circulating the Tractors, are fifty-six in number; thirty-four of whom are physicians and surgeons, and many of them of the first eminence, thirteen clergymen, most of whom are doctors of divinity, and connected with the literary institutions of America; among the remainder are two members of Congress, one professor of natural philosophy in a college, &c. &c." It seemed to be taken rather hardly by Mr. Perkins, that the translators of the work which he edited, in citing the names of the advocates of the Metallic Practice, frequently omitted the honorary titles which should have been annexed. The testimonials were obtained by the Danish writer, from a pamphlet published in America, in which these titles were given in full. Thus one of these testimonials is from "John Tyler, Esq., a magistrate in the county of New London, and late Brigadier General of the militia in that State." The "omission of the General's title," which is the subject



of complaint, must have been thought of so much consequence, because it showed great disrespect to the commanding powers of one of the patrons of tractoration. A similar complaint is made when "Calvin Goddard, Esq., of Plainfield, Attorney at Law, and a member of the Legislature of the State of Connecticut," is mentioned without his titular honors, and even on account of the omission of the proper official titles belonging to "Nathan Pierce, Esq. Governor and Manager of the Almshouse of Newburyport." These instances show the great importance to be attached to civil and military dignities, in qualifying their holders to judge of scientific subjects, a truth which has not been overlooked by the legitimate successors of the Perkinists. In Great Britain, the Tractors were not less honored than in America, by the learned and the illustrious. The "Perkinistic Committee" made this statement in their report. "Mr. Perkins has annually laid before the public a large collection of new cases communicated to him for that purpose, by disinterested and intelligent characters, from almost every quarter of Great Britain. In regard to the competency of these vouchers, it will be sufficient simply to state that, amongst others whose names have been attached to their communications, are eight professors in four different universities, twenty-one regular Physicians, nineteen Surgeons, thirty Clergymen, twelve of whom are Doctors of Divinity, and numerous other characters of equal respectability."

It cannot but excite our notice and surprise that the number of *clergymen* both in America and Great Britain who thrust forward their evidence on this medical topic, was singularly large in proportion to that of the members of the medical profession. Whole pages are contributed by such worthies as the Rev. Dr. Trotter of Hans Place, the Rev. Waring Willett, Chaplain to the Earl of Dunmore, the Rev. Dr. Clarke, Chaplain to the Prince of Wales. The style of these theologico-medical communications may be seen in the following from a divine who was also professor in one of the colleges of New England. "I have used the Tractors with success in several other cases in my own family, and although like Naaman the Syrian, I cannot tell why the waters of Jordan should be better than Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus; yet since experience has proved them so, no reasoning can change the opinion. Indeed, the causes of all common facts are, we think, perfectly well known to us, and it is very probable, fifty or a hundred years hence, we shall as

well know why the Metallic Tractors should in a few minutes remove violent pains, as we now know why cantharides and opium will produce opposite effects, namely, we shall know very little about either excepting facts." Fifty or a hundred years hence! if he could have looked forward forty years, he would have seen the descendants of the "Perkinistic" philosophers swallowing infinitesimal globules, and knowing and caring as much about the Tractors as the people at Saratoga Springs do about the waters of Abana and Pharpar.

I trust it will not be thought in any degree disrespectful to a profession which we all honor, that I have mentioned the great zeal of many clergymen in the cause of Perkinism. I hope, too, that I may without offence, suggest the causes which have often led them out of their own province into one to which their education has no special reference. The members of that profession ought to be, and commonly are, persons of benevolent character. Their duties carry them into the midst of families, and particularly at times when the members of them are suffering from bodily illness. It is natural enough that a strong desire should be excited to alleviate sufferings which may have defied the efforts of professional skill; as natural that any remedy which recommends itself to the belief or the fancy of the spiritual physician should be applied with the hope of benefit; and perfectly certain that the weakness of human nature, from which no profession is exempt, will lead him to take the most flattering view of its effects upon the patient; his own sagacity and judgment being staked upon the success of the trial. The inventor of the Tractors was aware of these truths. He therefore sent gratuitously to clergymen, a pair of his Tractors, accompanied with a formal certificate that the holder had become entitled to their possession by the payment of five guineas. This was practised in our own neighborhood, and I remember finding one of these certificates, so presented, which proved that among the risks of infancy I had to encounter Perkins's Tractors. Two clergymen of Boston and the vicinity, both well known to local fame, gave in their testimony to the value of the instruments thus presented to them; an unusually moderate proportion, when it is remembered that to the common motives of which I have spoken, was added the seduction of a gift for which the profane public was expected to pay so largely.

It was remarkable, also, that Perkinism, which had so lit-

tle success with the medical and scientific part of the community, found great favor in the eyes of its more lovely and less obstinate portion. "The lady of Major Oxholm," — I quote from Mr. Perkins's volume — "having been lately in America, had seen and heard much of the great effects of Perkinism. Influenced by a most benevolent disposition, she brought these Tractors and the pamphlet with her to Europe, with a laudable desire of extending their utility to her suffering countrymen." Such was the channel by which the Tractors were conveyed to Denmark, where they soon became the ruling passion. The workmen, says a French writer, could not manufacture them fast enough. Women carried them about their persons, and delighted in bringing them into general use. To what extent the Tractors were favored with the patronage of English and American ladies, it is of course not easy to say, except on general principles, as their names were not brought before the public. But one of Dr. Haygarth's stories may lead us to conjecture, that there was a class of female practitioners who went about doing good with the Tractors in England as well as in Denmark. A certain lady had the misfortune to have a spot as big as a silver penny at the corner of her eye, caused by a bruise, or some such injury. Now, another lady, who was a friend of hers, and a strong believer in Perkinism, was very anxious to try the effects of tractoration upon this unfortunate blemish. The patient consented; the lady "produced the instruments, and, after drawing them four or five times over the spot, declared that it changed to a paler color, and on repeating the use of them a few minutes longer, that it had almost vanished, and was scarcely visible, and departed in high triumph at her success." The lady who underwent the operation, assured the narrator "that she looked in the glass immediately after, and that not the least visible alteration had taken place."

It would be a very interesting question, what was the intellectual character of those persons most conspicuous in behalf of the Perkinistic delusion? Such an inquiry might bring to light some principles which we could hereafter apply to the study of other popular errors. But the obscurity into which nearly all these enthusiasts have subsided, renders the question easier to ask than to answer. I believe it would have been found that most of these persons were of ardent temperament and of considerable imagination, and

that their history would shew that Perkinism was not the first nor the last hobby horse they rode furiously. Many of them may very probably have been persons of more than common talent, of active and ingenious minds, of versatile powers and various acquirements. Such, for instance, was the estimable man to whom I have repeatedly referred as a warm defender of tractoration, and a bitter assailant of its enemies. The story tells itself in the biographical preface to his poem. He went to London with the view of introducing a hydraulic machine, which he and his Vermont friends regarded as a very important invention. He found, however, that the machine was already in common use in that metropolis. A brother Yankee, then in London, had started the project of a mill, which was to be carried by the water of the Thames. He was sanguine enough to purchase one fifth of this concern, which also proved a failure. At about the same period he wrote the work which proved the great excitement of his mind upon the subject of the transient folly then before the public. Originally a lawyer, he was in succession a mechanician, a poet, and an editor, meeting with far less success in each of these departments than usually attends men of less varied gifts, but of more tranquil and phlegmatic composition. But who is ignorant that there is a class of minds characterised by qualities like those I have mentioned; minds with many bright and even beautiful traits; but aimless and fickle as the butterfly; that settle upon every gaily colored illusion as it opens into flower, and flutter away to another when the first has dropped its leaves and stands naked in the icy air of truth!

Let us now look at the general tenor of the arguments addressed by believers to sceptics and opponents. Foremost of all, emblazoned at the head of every column, loudest shouted by every triumphant disputant, held up as paramount to all other considerations, stretched like an impenetrable shield to protect the weakest advocate of the great cause against the weapons of the adversary, was that omnipotent monosyllable, which has been the patrimony of cheats and the currency of dupes from time immemorial—Facts! Facts! Facts! First came the published cases of the American clergymen, brigadier generals, almshouse governors, representatives, attorneys, and esquires. Then came the published cases of the surgeons of Copenhagen. Then followed reports of about one hundred and fifty cases published in England,



“demonstrating the efficacy of the metallic practice in a variety of complaints both upon the human body and on horses, etc.” But the progress of *facts* in Great Britain did not stop here. Let those who rely upon the numbers of their testimonials as being alone sufficient to prove the soundness and stability of a medical novelty, digest the following from the report of the Perkinistic Committee. “The cases published [in Great Britain] amounted, in March last, the date of Mr. Perkins’s last publication, to about five thousand. Supposing that not more than one cure in three hundred which the Tractors have performed, has been published, and the proportion is probably much greater, it will be seen that the number, to March last, will have exceeded one million five hundred thousand !”

Next in order, after the appeal to what were called *facts*, came a series of arguments, which have been so long bruised and battered round in the cause of every doctrine or pretension, new, monstrous, or deliriously impossible, that each of them is as odiously familiar to the scientific scholar as the faces of so many old acquaintances among the less reputable classes, to the officers of police.

No doubt many of my hearers will recognise in the following passages, arguments they may have heard brought forward with triumphant confidence, in behalf of some doctrine not yet extinct. No doubt some may have honestly thought they proved something; may have used them with the purpose of convincing their friends, or of silencing the opponents of their favorite doctrine, whatever that might be. But any train of arguments which was contrived for Perkinism, which was just as applicable to it as to any other new doctrine in the same branch of science, and which was fully employed against its adversaries forty years since, might, in common charity, be suffered to slumber in the grave of Perkinism. Whether or not the following sentences, taken literally from the work of Mr. Perkins, were the originals of some of the idle propositions we hear bandied about from time to time, let those who listen judge.

The following is the test assumed for the new practice : “If diseases are really removed, as those persons who have practised extensively with the Tractors declare, it should seem there would be but little doubt of their being generally adopted ; but if the numerous reports of their efficacy which have been published are forgeries, or are unfounded, the

practice ought to be crushed." To this I merely add, it has been crushed.

The following sentence applies to that *à priori* judging and uncandid class of individuals who buy their dinners without tasting all the food there is in the market. "On all discoveries there are persons, who, without descending to any inquiry into the truth, pretend to know, as it were by *intuition*, that newly asserted facts are founded in the grossest errors. These were those who *knew* that Harvey's report of the circulation of the blood was a preposterous and ridiculous suggestion, and in latter [later] days there were others who knew that Franklin deserved reproach for declaring that points were preferable to balls for protecting buildings from lightning."

Again: "This unwarrantable mode of offering *assertion* for *proof*, so unauthorized and even unprecedented except in the condemnation of a Galileo, the persecution of a Copernicus, and a few other acts of inquisitorial authority, in the times of ignorance and superstition, affords but a lamentable instance of one of his remarks, that this is far from being the Age of Reason."

"The most valuable medicines in the *materia medica* act on principles of which we are totally ignorant. None have ever yet been able to explain how opium produces sleep—or how bark cures intermittent fevers; and yet few, it is hoped, will be so absurd as to desist from the use of these important articles because they know nothing of the principle of their operations." Or if the argument is preferred in the eloquent language of the Perkinistic poet—

"What though the CAUSES may not be explained,  
Since these EFFECTS are duly ascertained,  
Let not self-interest, prejudice or pride,  
Induce mankind to set the means aside;  
Means which, though simple, are by heaven designed  
T' alleviate the woes of human kind."

This course of argument is so often employed that it deserves to be expanded a little, so that its length and breadth may be fairly seen. A series of what are called facts are brought forward to prove some very improbable doctrine. It is objected by judicious people, or such as have devoted themselves to analogous subjects, that these assumed facts are in direct opposition to all that is known of the course of nature, that the universal experience of the past affords a powerful presumption against their truth, and that in

proportion to the gravity of these objections, should be the number and competence of the witnesses. The answer is a ready one. What do we know of the mysteries of Nature? Do we understand the intricate machinery of the Universe? When to this is added the never failing quotation,

“There are more things in Heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy—”

the question is thought to be finally disposed of.

Take the case of astrology as an example. It is in itself strange and incredible that the relations of the heavenly bodies to each other at a given moment of time, perhaps half a century ago, should have anything to do with my success or misfortune in any undertaking of to-day. But what right have I to say it cannot be so? Can I bind the sweet influence of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? I do not know by what mighty magic the planets roll in their fluid paths, confined to circles as unchanging as if they were rings of steel, nor why the great wave of ocean follows in a sleepless round upon the skirts of moonlight; nor can I say from any certain knowledge that the phases of the heavenly bodies, or even the falling of the leaves of the forest, or the manner in which the sands lie upon the sea shore, may not be knit up by invisible threads with the web of human destiny. There is a class of minds much more ready to believe that which is at first sight incredible, and because it is incredible, than what is generally thought reasonable. “*Credo quia impossibile est*,” I believe because it is impossible, is an old paradoxical expression which might be literally applied to this tribe of persons. And they always succeed in finding something marvellous, to call out the exercise of their robust faith. The old Cabalistic teachers maintained that there was not a verse, line, word, or even letter in the Bible that had not a special efficacy either to defend the person who rightly employed it, or to injure his enemies; always provided the original Hebrew was made use of. In the hands of modern Cabalists every substance, no matter how inert, acquires wonderful medicinal virtues, provided it be used in a proper state of purity and subdivision.

I have already mentioned the motives attributed by the Perkinists to the Medical Profession, as preventing its members from receiving the new but unwelcome truths. This

accusation is repeated in different forms and places, as, for instance, in the following passage.

“ Will the medical man, who has spent much money and labor in the pursuit of the arcana of Physic, and on the exercise of which depends his support in life, proclaim the inefficacy of his art, and recommend a remedy to his patient which the most unlettered in society can employ as advantageously as himself? and a remedy, too, which, unlike the drops, the pills, the powders, etc. of the *Materia Medica*, is *inconsumable*, and ever in readiness to be employed in successive diseases? ”

As usual with these people; much indignation was expressed at any parallel between their particular doctrine and practice and those of their exploded predecessors. “ The motives,” says the disinterested Mr. Perkins, “ which must have impelled to this attempt at classing the METALLIC PRACTICE with the most paltry of empyrical projects, are but too thinly veiled to escape detection.”

To all these arguments was added, as a matter of course, an appeal to the feelings of the benevolent in behalf of suffering humanity, in the shape of a notice that the poor would be treated *gratis*. It is pretty well understood that this gratuitous treatment of the poor, does not necessarily imply an excess of benevolence, any more than the gratuitous distribution of a trader’s shop bills is an evidence of remarkable generosity; in short, that it is one of those things which honest men often do from the best motives, but which rogues and impostors never fail to announce as one of their special recommendations. It is astonishing to see how these things brighten up at the touch of Mr. Perkins’s poet.

“ Ye worthy, honored, philanthropic few,  
The muse shall weave her brightest wreaths for you,  
Who in Humanity’s bland cause unite,  
Nor heed the shaft by interest aimed or spite;  
Like the great Pattern of Benevolence,  
Hygeia’s blessings to the poor dispense;  
And though opposed by folly’s servile brood,  
ENJOY THE LUXURY OF DOING GOOD.”

Having thus sketched the history of Perkinism in its days of prosperity; having seen how it sprung into being, and by what means it maintained its influence, it only remains to tell the brief story of its discomfiture and final downfall. The vast majority of the sensible part of the medical profession



were contented, so far as we can judge, to let it die out of itself. It was in vain that the advocates of this invaluable discovery exclaimed over their perverse and interested obstinacy—in vain that they called up the injured ghosts of Harvey, Galileo and Copernicus to shame that unbelieving generation; the Baillies and the Heberdens, — men whose names have come down to us as synonymous with honor and wisdom—bore their reproaches in meek silence, and left them unanswered to their fate. There were some others, however, who, believing the public to labor under a delusion, thought it worth while to see whether the charm would be broken by an open trial of its virtue, as compared with that of some less hallowed formula. It must be remembered that a peculiar value was attached to the Metallic Tractors, as made and patented by Mr. Perkins. Dr. Haygarth of Bath, performed various experiments upon patients afflicted with different complaints—the patients supposing that the real five guinea Tractors were employed. Strange to relate, he obtained equally wonderful effects with Tractors of lead and of wood; with nails, pieces of bone, slate pencil, and tobacco-pipe. Dr. Alderson employed sham Tractors made of wood, and produced such effects upon five patients that they returned solemn thanks in church for their cures. A single specimen of these cases may stand for all of them. Ann Hill had suffered for some months from pain in the right arm and shoulder. The Tractors (*wooden ones*) were applied, and in the space of five minutes she expressed herself relieved in the following apostrophe: “Bless me! why who could have thought it, that them little things could pull the pain from one. Well, to be sure, the longer one lives, the more one sees; ah dear!”

These experiments did not result in the immediate extinction of Perkinism. Doubtless they were a great comfort to many obstinate unbelievers, and helped to settle some sceptical minds; but for the real Perkinistic enthusiasts, it may be questioned whether they would at that time have changed their opinion though one had arisen from the dead to assure them it was an error. It perished without violence, by an easy and natural process. Like the famous toy of Mongolfier, it rose by means of heated air—the fevered breath of enthusiastic ignorance—and when this grew cool, as it always does in a little while, it collapsed and fell.

And now, on reviewing the whole subject, how shall we account for the extraordinary prevalence of the belief in Perkin-

ism among a portion of what is supposed to be the thinking part of the community?

Could the cures have been real ones, produced by the principle of ANIMAL MAGNETISM? To this it may be answered that the Perkinists ridiculed the idea of approximating Mesmer and the founder of their own doctrine, that nothing like the somnambulic condition seems to have followed the use of the Tractors, and that neither the exertion of the will, nor the powers of the individual who operated, seem to have been considered of any consequence. Besides, the absolute neglect into which the Tractors soon declined, is good evidence that they were incapable of affording any considerable and permanent relief in the complaints for the cure of which they were applied.

Of course a large number of apparent cures were due solely to nature; which is true under every form of treatment, orthodox or empirical. Of course many persons experienced at least temporary relief from the strong impression made upon their minds by this novel and marvellous method of treatment.

Many, again, influenced by the sanguine hopes of those about them, like dying people, who often say sincerely, from day to day, that they are getting better, cheated themselves into a false and short-lived belief that they were cured; and as happens in such cases, the public never knew more than the first half of the story.

When it was said to the Perkinists that whatever effects they produced were merely through the imagination, they declared (like the advocates of the ROYAL TOUCH, and the UNGUENTUM ARMARIUM) that this explanation was sufficiently disproved by the fact of numerous and successful cures which had been witnessed in infants and brute animals. Dr. Haygarth replied to this, that "in these cases it is not the *Patient*, but the *Observer*, who is deceived by his own imagination," and that such may be the fact, we have seen in the case of the good lady who thought she had conjured away the bunch from her friend's eye-lid, when it remained as large as ever.

As to the motives of the inventor and vender of the Tractors the facts must be allowed to speak for themselves. But when two little bits of brass and iron are patented, as an invention, as the result of numerous experiments, when people are led, or even allowed to infer that they are a peculiar compound, when they are artfully associated with a new and

brilliant discovery, (which then happened to be Galvanism,) when they are sold at many hundred times their value, and the seller prints his opinion that a Hospital will suffer inconvenience "unless it possesses many sets of the Tractors, and these placed in the hands of the patients to practise on each other," one cannot but suspect that they were contrived in the neighborhood of a wooden nutmeg factory; that legs of ham in that region are not made of the best mahogany; and that such as buy their cucumber seed in that vicinity, have to wait for the fruit as long as the Indians for their crop of gunpowder.

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The succeeding lecture will be devoted to an examination of the doctrines of Samuel Hahnemann and his disciples; doctrines which some consider new and others old; the common title of which is variously known as Hó-mæopathy, Homæ-opathy, Homæ-óp-athy, or Homœo-páth-y, and the claims of which are considered by some as infinitely important, and by many as immeasurably ridiculous.

I wish to state for the sake of any who may be interested in the subject, that I shall treat it not by ridicule, but by argument; perhaps with great freedom, but with good temper and in peaceable language; with very little hope of reclaiming converts, with no desire of making enemies, but with a firm belief that its pretensions and assertions cannot stand before a single hour of calm investigation.

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## LECTURE II.

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It may be thought that a direct attack upon the pretensions of HOMŒOPATHY is an uncalled for aggression upon an unoffending doctrine and its peaceful advocates.

But a little inquiry will show that it has long assumed so hostile a position with respect to the Medical Profession, that any trouble I, or any other member of that profession may choose to bestow upon it, may be considered merely as a matter of self-defence. It began with an attempt to shew the insignificance of all existing medical knowledge. It not only laid claim to wonderful powers of its own, but it declared the common practice to be attended with the most positively injurious effects, that by it acute diseases are aggravated, and chronic diseases rendered incurable. It has at various times brought forward collections of figures having the air of statistical documents, pretending to shew a great proportional mortality among the patients of the Medical Profession, as compared with those treated according to its own rules. Not contented with choosing a name of classical origin for itself, it invented one for the whole community of innocent physicians, assuring them, to their great surprise, that they were all ALLOPATHISTS, whether they knew it or not, and including all the illustrious masters of the past, from Hippocrates down to Hunter, under the same gratuitous title. The line, then, has been drawn by the champions of the new doctrine; they have lifted the lance, they have sounded the charge, and are responsible for any little skirmishing that may happen.

But, independently of any such grounds of active resist-

ance, the subject involves interests so disproportioned to its intrinsic claims, that it is no more than an act of humanity to give it a public examination. If the new doctrine is not truth, it is a dangerous, a deadly error. If it is a mere illusion, and acquires the same degree of influence that we have often seen obtained by other illusions, there is not one of my audience who may not have occasion to deplore the fatal credulity that listened to its promises.

I shall therefore undertake a sober examination of its principles, its facts, and some points of its history. The limited time at my disposal requires me to condense as much as possible what I have to say, but I shall endeavor to be plain and direct in expressing it. Not one statement shall be made which cannot be supported by unimpeachable reference; not one word shall be uttered which I am not as willing to print as to speak. I have no quibbles to utter, and I shall stoop to answer none; but with full faith in the sufficiency of a plain statement of facts and reasons, I submit the subject to the discernment of my audience.

The question may be asked in the outset,—Have you submitted the doctrines you are professing to examine to the test of long repeated and careful experiment; have you *tried* to see whether they were true or not? To this I answer, that it is abundantly evident from what has often happened, that it would be of no manner of use for me to allege the results of any experiments I might have instituted. Again and again have the most explicit statements been made by the most competent persons of the utter failure of all their trials, and there were the same abundant explanations offered as used to be for the Unguentum Armarium and the Metallic Tractors. I could by no possibility perform any experiments the result of which could not be easily explained away so as to be of no conclusive significance. Besides, as arguments in favor of Homœopathy are constantly addressed to the public in journals, pamphlets, and even lectures, by inexperienced dilettanti, the same channel must be open to all its opponents.

It is necessary for the sake of those to whom the whole subject may be new, to give in the smallest possible compass the substance of the Homœopathic Doctrine. Samuel Hahnemann, its founder, is a German physician, now living in Paris, at the age of 87 years.—In 1796 he published the first paper



containing his peculiar notions; in 1805 his first work on the subject; in 1810 his somewhat famous *Organon of the Healing Art*; the next year what he called the *Pure Materia Medica*, and in 1828 his last work, the *Treatise on Chronic Diseases*.—He has therefore been writing at intervals on his favorite subject for nearly half a century.

The one great doctrine which constitutes the basis of Homœopathy as a system, is expressed by the Latin aphorism,

“SIMILIA SIMILIBUS CURANTUR,”

or *like cures like*, that is, diseases are cured by agents capable of producing symptoms resembling those found in the disease under treatment. A disease for Hahnemann consists essentially in a group of symptoms. The proper medicine for any disease is the one which is capable of producing a similar group of symptoms, when given to a healthy person.

It is of course necessary to know what are the trains of symptoms excited by different substances, when administered to persons in health, if any such can be shown to exist. Hahnemann and his disciples give catalogues of the symptoms which they affirm were produced upon themselves or others by a large number of drugs which they submitted to experiment.

The second great fact which Hahnemann professes to have established, is the *efficacy of medicinal substances reduced to a wonderful degree of minuteness or dilution*. The following account of his mode of preparing his medicines, is from his work on *Chronic Diseases*, which has not, I believe, yet been translated into English. A grain of the substance, if it is solid, a drop if it is liquid, is to be added to about a third part of one hundred grains of sugar of milk in an unglazed porcelain capsule, which has had the polish removed from the lower part of its cavity by rubbing it with wet sand; they are to be mingled for an instant with a bone or horn spatula, and then rubbed together for six minutes; then the mass is to be scraped together from the mortar and pestle, which is to take four minutes; then to be again rubbed for six minutes. Four minutes are then to be devoted to scraping the powder into a heap, and the second third of the hundred grains of sugar of milk to be added. Then they are to be stirred an instant and rubbed six minutes — again to be scraped together four minutes and forcibly rubbed six; once more scraped together for four minutes, when the last third of the hundred grains of sugar of milk is

to be added and mingled by stirring with the spatula; six minutes of forcible rubbing, four of scraping together, and six more (positively the last six) of rubbing, finish this part of the process.

Every grain of this powder contains the hundredth of a grain of the medicinal substance mingled with the sugar of milk. — If, therefore, a grain of the powder just prepared is mingled with another hundred grains of sugar of milk, and the process just described repeated, we shall have a powder of which every grain contains the hundredth of the hundredth, or the ten thousandth part of a grain of the medicinal substance. Repeat the same process with the same quantity of fresh sugar of milk, and every grain of your powder will contain the millionth of a grain of the medicinal substance.—When the powder is of this strength, it is proper to employ in the further solutions and dilutions to be made use of in practice.

A grain of the powder is to be taken, a hundred drops of alcohol to be poured on it, the vial to be slowly turned for a few minutes, until the powder is dissolved, and two shakes to be given to it. On this point I will quote Hahnemann's own words. "A long experience and multiplied observations upon the sick lead me within the last few years to prefer giving only two shakes to medicinal liquids, whereas I formerly used to give ten."—The process of dilution is carried on in the same way as the attenuation of the powder was done; each successive dilution with alcohol reducing the medicine to a hundredth part of the quantity of that which preceded it. In this way the dilution of the original millionth of a grain of medicine contained in the grain of powder operated on, is carried successively to the billionth, trillionth, quadrillionth, quintillionth, and very often much higher fractional divisions. A dose of any of these medicines is a minute fraction of a drop, obtained by moistening with them one or more little globules of sugar, of which Hahnemann says it takes about two hundred to weigh a grain.

As an instance of the strength of the medicines prescribed by Hahnemann, I will mention carbonate of lime. He does not employ common chalk, but prefers a little portion of the friable part of an oyster shell. Of this substance, carried to the sextillionth degree, so much as one or two globules of the size mentioned can imbibe, is a common dose. But for persons of very delicate nerves it is proper that the dilution

should be carried to the decillionth degree. That is, an important medicinal effect is to be expected from the two hundredth or hundredth part of the millionth of the millionth of the millionth of the millionth, of the millionth of the millionth of the millionth of a grain of oyster-shell. This is only the tenth degree of potency, but some of his disciples profess to have obtained palpable effects from much higher dilutions.\*

The third great doctrine of Hahnemann is the following. *Seven-eighths at least of all chronic diseases* are produced by the existence in the system of that infectious disorder known in the language of science by the appellation of *PSORA*, but to the less refined portion of the community by the name of *ITCH*. In the words of Hahnemann's *Organon*, "This Psora is the sole true and fundamental cause that produces all the other countless forms of disease, which, under the names of nervous debility, hysteria, hypochondriasis, insanity, melancholy, idiocy, madness, epilepsy, and spasms of all kinds, softening of the bones, or rickets, scoliosis and cyphosis, caries, cancer, fungus hematodes, gout — yellow jaundice and cyanosis, dropsy — gastralgia, epistaxis, hemoptysis — asthma and suppuration of the lungs — megrim, deafness, cataract and amaurosis, — paralysis, loss of sense, pains of every kind, &c., appear in our pathology as so many peculiar, distinct and independent diseases."

For the last three centuries, if the same authority may be trusted, under the influence of the more refined personal habits which have prevailed, and the application of various external remedies which repel the affection from the skin,

\* The degrees of *DILUTION* must not be confounded with those of *POTENCY*. Their relations may be seen by this table.

|                                                 |   |                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1st dilution,—One hundredth of a drop or grain. |   |                                                                                         |
| 2d                                              | " | One ten thousandth,                                                                     |
| 3d                                              | " | One millionth,—marked <i>I</i> .                                                        |
| 4th                                             | " | One hundred millionth.                                                                  |
| 5th                                             | " | One ten thousand millionth.                                                             |
| 6th                                             | " | One million millionth, or one billionth—marked <i>II</i> .                              |
| 7th                                             | " | One hundred billionth.                                                                  |
| 8th                                             | " | One ten thousand billionth.                                                             |
| 9th                                             | " | One million billionth, or one trillionth—marked <i>III</i> .                            |
| 10th                                            | " | One hundred trillionth.                                                                 |
| 11th                                            | " | One ten thousand trillionth.                                                            |
| 12th                                            | " | One million trillionth, or one quadrillionth—marked <i>IV</i> .—and so on indefinitely. |

The large figures denote the degrees of *POTENCY*.

Psora has revealed itself in these numerous forms of internal disease, instead of appearing, as in former periods, under the aspect of an external malady.

These are the three cardinal doctrines of Hahnemann, as laid down in those standard works of Homœopathy, the *Organon* and the *Treatise on Chronic Diseases*.

Several other principles may be added, upon all of which he insists with great force, and which are very generally received by his disciples.

1. Very little power is allowed to the curative efforts of nature. Hahnemann goes so far as to say, that no one has ever seen the simple efforts of nature effect the durable recovery of a patient from a chronic disease. In general, the Homœopathist calls every recovery which happens under his treatment a *cure*.

2. Every medicinal substance must be administered in a state of the most perfect purity, and uncombined with any other. The union of several remedies in a single prescription destroys its utility, and, according to the *Organon*, frequently adds a new disease.

3. A large number of substances commonly thought to be inert, develop great medicinal powers when prepared in the manner already described; and a great proportion of them are ascertained to have specific antidotes in case their excessive effects require to be neutralized.

4. Diseases should be recognised, as far as possible, not by any of the common names imposed upon them, as fever or epilepsy, but as individual collections of symptoms, each of which differs from every other collection.

5. The symptoms of any complaint must be described with the most minute exactness, and as far as possible in the patient's own words. To illustrate the kind of circumstances the patient is expected to record, I will mention one or two from the 313th page of the *Treatise on Chronic Diseases* — being the first one to which I opened accidentally.

“After dinner, disposition to sleep; the patient winks.”

“After dinner, prostration and feeling of weakness (nine days after taking the remedy.)”

This remedy was that same oystershell which is to be prescribed in fractions of the sextillionth or decillionth degree. According to Hahnemann, the action of a single dose of the size mentioned does not fully display itself in some cases, until twenty-four or even thirty days after it is taken, and in such in-

stances has not exhausted its good effects until towards the fortieth or fiftieth day — before which time it would be absurd and injurious to administer a new remedy.

So much for the doctrines of Hahnemann, which have been stated without comment, or exaggeration of any of their features, very much as any adherent of his opinions might have stated them, if obliged to compress them into so narrow a space.

Does Hahnemann himself represent Homœopathy as it now exists? He certainly ought to be its best representative, after having created it, and devoted his life to it for half a century. He is spoken of as the great physician of the time, in most, if not all homœopathic works. If he is not authority on the subject of his own doctrines, *who is?* So far as I am aware, not one tangible discovery in the so called science, has ever been ascribed to any other observer; at least, no general principle or law, of consequence enough to claim any prominence in homœopathic works, has ever been pretended to have originated with any of his illustrious disciples. He is one of the only two homœopathic writers with whom as I shall mention, the Paris publisher will have any thing to do upon his own account. The other is Jahr, whose Manual is little more than a catalogue of symptoms and remedies. If any persons choose to reject Hahnemann as not in the main representing Homœopathy, if they strike at his authority, if they wink out of sight his deliberate and formally announced results, it is an act of suicidal rashness, for upon his sagacity and powers of observation, and experience, as embodied in his works, and especially in his *Materia Medica*, repose the foundations of Homœopathy as a practical system.

So far as I can learn from the conflicting statements made upon the subject, the following is the present condition of belief.

1. All of any note agree that the law *Similia similibus* is the only fundamental principle in medicine. Of course, if any man does not agree to this, the name Homœopathist can no longer be applied to him with propriety.

2. The belief in and employment of the infinitesimal doses is general, and in some places universal among the advocates of Homœopathy; but a distinct movement has been made in Germany to get rid of any restriction to the use of these



doses, and to employ medicines with the same license as other practitioners.

3. The doctrine of the origin of most chronic diseases in Psora, notwithstanding Hahnemann says it cost him twelve years of study and research to establish the fact and its practical consequences, has met with great neglect and even opposition from very many of his own disciples.

It is true, notwithstanding, that throughout most of their writings which I have seen, there runs a general tone of great deference to Hahnemann's opinions, a constant reference to his authority, a general agreement with the minor points of his belief, and a pretence of harmonious union in a common faith.\*

Many persons and most physicians and scientific men would be satisfied with the statement of these doctrines and examine them no farther. They would consider it vastly more probable that any observer in so fallacious and difficult a field of inquiry as medicine, had been led into error, or walked into it of his own accord, than that such numerous and extraordinary facts had really just come to light. They would feel a right to exercise the same obduracy towards them as the French Institute is in the habit of displaying when memoirs or models are offered to it, relating to the squaring of the circle or perpetual motion; which it is the rule to pass over without notice. They would feel as astronomers and natural philosophers must have felt when some half a dozen years ago, an unknown man came forward, and asked for an opportunity to demonstrate to Arago and his colleagues, that the moon and planets were at a distance of a little more than a hundred miles from the earth. And so they would not even look into Homœopathy, notwithstanding that all its advocates should exclaim in the words of Mr. Benjamin Douglass Perkins, vender of the Metallic Tractors, that "On all discoveries there are persons who without descending to any inquiry into the truth, pretend to know as it were by *intuition* that newly asserted facts are founded in the grossest errors." And they would lay their heads upon their pillows with a perfectly clear conscience, although they were assured that they were behaving in the same way that people

\* Those who will take the trouble to look over Hull's Translation of Jahr's Manual, may observe how little comparative space is given to remedies resting upon any other authority than Hahnemann.

of old did towards Harvey, Galileo and Copernicus, the identical great names which were invoked by Mr. Benjamin Douglass Perkins.

But experience has shown that the character of these assertions is not sufficient to deter many from examining their claims to belief. I therefore lean but very slightly on the extravagance and extreme apparent singularity of their pretensions. I might have omitted them, but on the whole it seemed more just to the claims of my argument to suggest the vast complication of improbabilities involved in the statements enumerated. Every one must of course judge for himself as to the weight of these objections, which are by no means brought forward as a proof of the extravagance of Homœopathy, but simply as entitled to a brief consideration before the *facts* of the case are submitted to our scrutiny.

The three great asserted discoveries of Hahnemann are entirely unconnected with and independent of each other. Were there any natural relation between them, it would seem probable enough that the discovery of the first would have led to that of the others. But assuming that diseases are cured by remedies capable of producing symptoms like their own to be a fact, no manifest relation exists between this fact and the next assertion, namely, the power of the infinitesimal doses. And allowing both these to be true, neither has the remotest affinity to the third new doctrine, that which declares seven-eighths of all chronic diseases to be owing to Psora.

This want of any obvious relation between Hahnemann's three cardinal doctrines, appears to be self-evident, upon inspection. But if, as is often true with his disciples, they prefer the authority of one of their own number, I will refer them to Dr. Trinks's paper on the present state of Homœopathy in Europe, with which, of course, they are familiar, as his name is mentioned as one of the most prominent champions of their faith, in their American official organ. It would be a fact without a parallel in the history, not merely of medicine, but of science, that three such unconnected and astonishing discoveries, each of them a complete revolution of all that ages of the most varied experience had been taught to believe, should spring full formed from the brain of a single individual.

Let us look a moment at the first of his doctrines. Improbable though it may seem to some, there is no essential

absurdity involved in the proposition that diseases yield to remedies capable of producing like symptoms. There are, on the other hand, some analogies which lend a degree of plausibility to the statement. There are well ascertained facts, known from the earliest periods of medicine, showing that under certain circumstances, the very medicine which, from its known effects, one would expect to aggravate the disease, may contribute to its relief. I may be permitted to allude in the most general way, to the case in which the spontaneous efforts of an overtasked stomach are quieted by the agency of a drug which that organ refuses to entertain upon any terms. But that *every* cure ever performed by medicine, should have been founded upon this principle, although without the knowledge of the physician, that the Homœopathic axiom is, as Hahnemann asserts, “the *sole* law of nature in therapeutics,” a law of which nothing more than a transient glimpse ever presented itself to the innumerable host of medical observers, is a dogma of such sweeping extent, and pregnant novelty, that it demands a corresponding breadth and depth of unquestionable facts, to cover its vast pretensions.

So much ridicule has been thrown upon the pretended powers of the *minute doses*, that I shall only touch upon this point for the purpose of conveying, by illustrations, some shadow of ideas far transcending the powers of the imagination to realize. It must be remembered, that these comparisons are not matters susceptible of dispute, being founded on simple arithmetical computations, level to the capacity of any intelligent school boy. A person who once wrote a very small pamphlet, made some show of objecting to calculations of this kind, on the ground that the highest dilutions could easily be made with a few ounces of alcohol. But he should have remembered that at every successive dilution, he lays aside or throws away ninety-nine hundredths of the fluid on which he is operating, and that, although he begins with a drop, he only prepares a millionth, billionth, trillionth, and similar fractions of it, all of which, added together, would constitute but a vastly minute portion of the drop with which he began. But now let us suppose we take one single drop of the tincture of chamomile, and that the *whole* of this were to be carried through the common series of dilutions.

A calculation nearly like the following, was made by Dr. Panvini, and may be readily followed in its essential particulars, by any one who chooses.

For the first dilution it would take 100 drops of alcohol.

For the second dilution it would take 10,000 drops, or about a pint.

For the third dilution, it would take 100 pints.

For the fourth dilution it would take 10,000 pints, or more than 1000 gallons, and so on to the ninth dilution, which would take ten billion gallons, which he computed would fill the basin of Lake Agnano, a body of water two miles in circumference. The twelfth dilution would of course fill a million such lakes. By the time the seventeenth degree of dilution should be reached, the alcohol required would equal in quantity the waters of ten thousand Adriatic seas. Trifling errors must be expected, but they are as likely to be on one side as the other, and any little matter like lake Superior or the Caspian would be but a drop in the bucket.

Swallowers of globules, one of your little pellets, moistened in the mingled waves of one million lakes of alcohol, each two miles in circumference, with which had been blended that one drop of Tincture of Chamomile, would be of precisely the strength recommended for that medicine in your favorite Jahr's Manual, against the most sudden, frightful and fatal diseases! \*

And proceeding on the common data, I have just made a calculation which shows that this single drop of Tincture of Chamomile, given in the quantity ordered by Jahr's Manual, would have supplied every individual of the whole human family past and present, with more than five billion doses each, the action of each dose lasting about four days.

Yet this is given only at the quadrillionth, or fourth degree of potency, and various substances are frequently administered at the decillionth or tenth degree, and occasionally at still higher attenuations with professed medicinal results. Is there not in this as great an exception to all the hitherto received laws of nature, as in the miracle of the loaves and fishes? Ask this

\* In the French Edition of 1834, the proper doses of the medicines are mentioned, and Chamomile is marked IV. — Why are the doses omitted in Hull's Translation, except in three instances out of the whole two hundred remedies, notwithstanding the promise in the preface, that "some remarks upon the *doses used*—may be found at the head of each medicine"? Possibly because it makes no difference whether they are employed in one homœopathic dose or another; but then it is very singular that such precise directions were formerly given in the same work, and that Hahnemann's "experience" should have led him to draw the nice distinctions we have seen in a former part of this Lecture, (p. 31.)

question of a Homœopathist, and he will answer by referring to the effects produced by a very minute portion of vaccine matter, or the extraordinary diffusion of odors. But the vaccine matter is one of those substances called *morbid poisons*, of which it is a peculiar character to multiply themselves, when introduced into the system, as a seed does in the soil. Therefore the hundredth part of a grain of the vaccine matter, if no more than this is employed, soon increases in quantity, until, in the course of about a week, it is a grain or more, and can be removed in considerable drops. And what is a very curious illustration of Homœopathy, it never produces symptoms of any consequence, until it is already in sufficient quantity not merely to be visible, but to be collected for further use. The thoughtlessness which can allow an inference to be extended from a product of disease possessing this susceptibility of multiplication when conveyed into the living body, to substances of inorganic origin, such as silex or sulphur, would be capable of arguing that a pebble may produce a mountain, because an acorn can become a forest.

As to the analogy to be found between the alleged action of the infinitely attenuated doses, and the effects of some very odorous substances which possess the extraordinary power of diffusing their imponderable emanations through a very wide space, however it may be abused in argument, and rapidly as it evaporates on examination, it is not like that just mentioned, wholly inexcusable. The fact of the vast diffusion of some odors, as that of musk or the rose, for instance, has long been cited as the most remarkable illustration of the divisibility of matter, and the nicety of the senses. And if this were compared with the effects of a very minute dose of morphia on the whole system, or the sudden and fatal impression of a single drop of prussic acid, or with what comes still nearer, the poisonous influence of an atmosphere impregnated with invisible *malaria*, we should find in each of these examples, an evidence of the degree to which nature, in some few instances, concentrates powerful qualities in minute or subtile forms of matter. But if a man comes to me with a pestle and mortar in his hand, and tells me that he will take a little speck of some substance which nobody ever thought to have any smell at all, as for instance, a grain of chalk or of charcoal, and that he will after an hour or two of rubbing and scraping, develope in it an odor which shall be capable of pervading a whole apartment, a house, a village, a province,



an empire, nay, the entire atmosphere of this broad planet upon which we tread ; and that from each of fifty or sixty substances, he can in this way develope a distinct and hitherto unknown odor ; and if he tries to show that all this is rendered quite reasonable by the analogy of musk and roses, I shall certainly be justified in considering him incapable of reasoning, and beyond the reach of my argument. What if, instead of this, he professes to develope new and wonderful medicinal powers from the same speck of chalk or charcoal, in such quantity as would impregnate every pond, lake, river, sea and ocean of our globe, and appeals to the same analogy in favor of the probability of his assertion ?

All this may be true, notwithstanding these considerations. But so extraordinary would be the fact, that a single atom of substances which a child might swallow without harm by the tea-spoonful, could, by an easy mechanical process, be made to develope such inconceivable powers, that nothing but the strictest agreement of the most cautious experimenters, secured by every guaranty that they were honest and faithful, appealing to repeated experiments in public, with every precaution to guard against error, and with the most plain and peremptory results, should induce us to lend any credence to such pretensions.

The third doctrine, that *Psora*, the other name of which you remember, is the cause of the great majority of chronic diseases, is a startling one, to say the least. That an affection always recognised as a very unpleasant personal companion, but generally regarded as a mere temporary incommodity, readily yielding to treatment in those unfortunate enough to suffer from it, and hardly known among the better classes of society, should be all at once found out by a German physician, to be the great scourge of mankind, the cause of their severest bodily and mental calamities, cancer and consumption, idiocy and madness, must excite our unqualified surprise. And when the originator of this singular truth, ascribes, as in the page now open before me, the declining health of a disgraced courtier, the chronic malady of a bereaved mother, even the melancholy of the love sick and slighted maiden, to nothing more or less than the insignificant, unseemly, and almost unmentionable ITCH, does it not seem as if the very soil upon which we stand, was dissolving into chaos, over the earthquake heaving of discovery ?

And when one man claims to have established these three

independent truths, which are about as remote from each other, as the discovery of the law of gravitation, the invention of printing, and that of the mariner's compass, unless the facts in their favor are overwhelming and unanimous, the question naturally arises—is not this man deceiving himself, or trying to deceive others?

I proceed to examine the proofs of the leading ideas of Hahnemann and his school.

In order to show the axiom, *similia similibus curantur*, (or like is cured by like,) to be the basis of the healing art—"the sole law of nature in therapeutics,"—it is necessary,

1. That the symptoms produced by drugs in healthy persons, should be faithfully studied and recorded.

2. That drugs should be shown to be always capable of curing those diseases most like their own symptoms.

3. That remedies should be shown *not* to cure diseases when they do not produce symptoms resembling those presented in these diseases.

1. The effects of drugs upon healthy persons have been studied by Hahnemann and his associates. Their results were made known in his *Materia Medica*, a work in three large volumes in the French translation, published about eight years ago. The mode of experimentation appears to have been, to take the substance on trial, either in common or minute doses, and then to set down every little sensation, every little movement of mind or body, which occurred within many succeeding hours or days, as being produced solely by the substance employed. When I have enumerated some of the symptoms attributed to the power of the drugs taken, you will be able to judge how much value is to be ascribed to the assertions of such observers.

The following list was taken literally from the *Materia Medica* of Hahnemann, by my friend M. Vernois, for whose accuracy I am willing to be responsible. He has given seven pages of these symptoms, not selected, but taken at hazard from the French translation of the work. I shall be very brief in my citations.

"After stooping some time, sense of painful weight about the head, upon resuming the erect posture."

"An itching, tickling sensation at the outer edge of the palm of the left hand, which obliges the person to scratch." The medicine was acetate of lime, and as the action of the

globule taken is said to last twenty-eight days, you may judge how many such symptoms as the last, might be supposed to happen.

Among the symptoms attributed to muriatic acid, are these ; a catarrh—sighing—pimples—“ after having written a long time with the back a little bent over, violent pain in the back and shoulder blades, as if from a strain,”—“ dreams which are not remembered—disposition to mental dejection—wakefulness before and after midnight.”

I might extend this catalogue almost indefinitely. I have not cited these specimens with any view to exciting a sense of the ridiculous, which many others of those mentioned would not fail to do, but to show that the common accidents of sensation, the little bodily inconveniences to which all of us are subject, are seriously and systematically ascribed to whatever medicine may have been exhibited, even in the minute doses I have mentioned, whole days or weeks previously.

To these are added all the symptoms ever said by anybody, whether deserving confidence or not, as I shall hereafter illustrate, to be produced by the substance in question.

The effects of sixty-four medicinal substances ascertained by one or both of these methods, are enumerated in the *Materia Medica* of Hahnemann, which may be considered as the basis of practical Homœopathy. In the *Manual of Jahr*, which is the common guide, as far as I know, of those who practice Homœopathy in these regions, two hundred remedies are enumerated, many of which, however, have never been employed in practice. In at least one edition, there were no means of distinguishing those which had been tried upon the sick, from the others. It is true that marks have been added in the edition employed here, which serve to distinguish them, but what are we to think of a standard *practical* author on *Materia Medica*, who at one time omits to designate the proper doses of his remedies, and at another, to let us have any means of knowing whether a remedy has ever been tried or not, while he is recommending its employment in the most critical and threatening diseases?

I think that from what I have shown of the character of Hahnemann's experiments, it would be a satisfaction to any candid inquirer, to know whether other persons, to whose assertions he could look with confidence, confirm these pretended facts. Now there are many individuals, long and well known to the scientific world, who have tried these experi-

ments upon healthy subjects, and utterly deny that their effects have at all corresponded to Hahnemann's assertions.

I will take, for instance, the statements of Andral, (and I am not referring to his well known public experiments in his hospital,) as to the result of his own trials. ' This distinguished physician is Professor of Medicine in the School of Paris, and one of the most widely known and valued authors upon practical and theoretical subjects the profession can claim in any country. He is a man of great kindness of character, a most liberal eclectic by nature and habit, of unquestioned integrity, and is called, in the leading article of the first number of the *Homœopathic Examiner*, "an eminent and very enlightened allopathist." Assisted by a number of other persons in good health, he experimented on the effects of cinchona, aconite, sulphur, arnica, and the other most highly extolled remedies. His experiments lasted a year, and he stated publicly to the Academy of Medicine, that they never produced the slightest appearance of the symptoms attributed to them. The results of a man like this, so extensively known as one of the most philosophical and candid, as well as brilliant of instructors, and whose admirable abilities, and great liberality, are generally conceded, ought to be of great weight in deciding the question.

M. Double, a well known medical writer and a physician of high standing in Paris, had occasion as long ago as 1801, before he had heard of Homœopathy, to make experiments upon Cinchona, or Peruvian bark. He and several others took the drug in every kind of dose for four months, and the fever it is pretended by Hahnemann to excite, never was produced.

M. Bonnet, President of the Royal Society of Medicine of Bourdeaux, had occasion to observe many soldiers during the peninsular war, who made use of cinchona as a preservative against different diseases—but he never found it to produce the pretended paroxysms.

If any objection were made to evidence of this kind, I would refer to the express experiments on many of the Homœopathic substances, given to healthy persons, instituted with every precaution as to diet and regimen, by M. Louis Fleury, without the slightest of the pretended consequences resulting.—And let me mention as a curious fact, that the same quantity of arsenic given to one animal in the common form of the unprepared powder, and to another after having

been rubbed up into six hundred globules, offered no particular difference of activity in the two cases. This is a strange contradiction to the doctrine of the development of what they call by an ingenious pleonasm "dynamic power," by means of friction and subdivision.

And in 1835, a public challenge was offered to the best known Homœopathic physician in Paris to select any ten substances asserted to produce the most striking effects; to prepare them himself; to choose one by lot without knowing which of them he had taken, and try it upon himself or any intelligent and devoted Homœopathist, and waiting his own time, to come forward and tell what substance had been employed.—The challenge was at first accepted, but the acceptance retracted before the time of trial arrived.

From all this I think it fair to conclude, that the catalogues of symptoms, attributed in Homœopathic works to the influence of various drugs upon healthy persons, are not entitled to any confidence.

2. It is necessary to show in the next place that medicinal substances are always capable of curing diseases most like their own symptoms. For facts relating to this question we must look to two sources; the recorded experience of the medical profession in general; and the results of trials made according to homœopathic principles, and capable of testing the truth of the doctrine.

No person, that I am aware of, has ever denied that in some cases there exists a resemblance between the effects of a remedy and the symptoms of diseases in which it is beneficial. This has been recognised, as Hahnemann himself has shown, from the time of Hippocrates. But according to the records of the medical profession, as they have been hitherto interpreted, this is true of only a very small proportion of useful remedies. Nor has it ever been considered as an established truth that the efficacy of even these few remedies was in any definite ratio to their power of producing symptoms more or less like those they cured.

Such was the state of opinion, when Hahnemann came forward with the proposition that all the cases of successful treatment found in the works of all preceding medical writers, were to be ascribed solely to the operation of the homœopathic principle, which had effected the cure, although without the physician's knowledge that this was the real secret. And strange as it may seem, he was enabled to give such a degree



of plausibility to this assertion, that any person not acquainted somewhat with medical literature, not quite familiar, I should rather say, with the relative value of medical evidence, according to the sources whence it is derived, would be almost frightened into the belief, at seeing the pages upon pages of Latin names he has summoned as his witnesses.

It has hitherto been customary, when examining the writings of authors of preceding ages, upon subjects as to which they were less enlightened than ourselves, and which they were very liable to misrepresent, to exercise some little discretion; to discriminate, in some measure, between writers deserving confidence and those not entitled to it. But there is not the least appearance of any such delicacy on the part of Hahnemann. A large majority of the names of old authors he cites are wholly unknown to science. With some of them I have been long acquainted, and I know that their accounts of diseases are no more to be trusted than their contemporary Ambrose Paré's stories of mermen, and similar absurdities. But if my judgment is rejected, as being a prejudiced one, I can refer to Cullen, who mentioned three of Hahnemann's authors in one sentence, as being "not necessarily bad authorities; but certainly such when they delivered very improbable events;" and as this was said more than half a century ago, it could not have had any reference to Hahnemann. But although not the slightest sign of discrimination is visible in his quotations -- although for him a handful of chaff from Schenck is all the same thing as a measure of wheat from Morgagni, there is a formidable display of authorities, and an abundant proof of ingenious researches to be found in each of the great works of Hahnemann with which I am familiar.\*

It is stated by Dr. Leo-Wolf, that Professor Joerg, of Leipsic, has proved many of Hahnemann's quotations from old authors to be adulterate and false. What particular instances he has pointed out I have no means of learning. And it is probably wholly impossible on this side of the Atlantic, and even in most of the public libraries of Europe, to find any thing more than a small fraction of the innu-

\* Some painful surmises might arise as to the erudition of Hahnemann's English Translator, who makes two individuals of "Zacutus, Lucitanus," as well as respecting that of the conductors of an American Homœopathic periodical, who suffer the name of the world-renowned Cardanus to be spelt Cardamus in at least three places, were not this gross ignorance of course attributable only to the printer.

merable obscure publications which the neglect of grocers and trunk makers has spared to be ransacked by the all-devouring genius of Homœopathy. I have endeavored to verify such passages as my own library afforded me the means of doing. For some I have looked in vain, for want, as I am willing to believe, of more exact references. But this I am able to affirm, that out of the very small number which I have been able to trace back to their original authors, I have found two to be wrongly quoted, one of them being a gross misrepresentation.

The first is from the ancient Roman author, Cælius Aurelianus; the second from the venerable folio of Forestus. Hahnemann uses the following expressions,—if he is not misrepresented in the English Translation of the Organon; “Asclepiades on one occasion cured an inflammation of the brain by administering a small quantity of wine.” After correcting the erroneous reference of the Translator, I can find no such case alluded to in the chapter. But Cælius Aurelianus mentions two modes of treatment employed by Asclepiades, into both of which the use of wine entered, as being in the highest degree irrational and dangerous.\*

In speaking of the oil of aniseed, Hahnemann says that Forestus observed violent colic caused by its administration. But as that author tells the story, a young man took, by the counsel of a surgeon, an acrid and virulent medicine, the name of which is not given, which brought on a most cruel fit of the gripes and colic. After this another surgeon was called, who gave him oil of aniseed and wine, which increased his suffering.† Now if this was the Homœopathic remedy, as Hahnemann pretends, it might be a fair question why the young man was not cured by it. But it is a much graver question why a man who has shrewdness and learning enough to go so far after his facts, should think it right to treat them with such astonishing negligence or such artful unfairness.

Even if every word he had pretended to take from his old authorities were to be found in them, even if the authority of every one of these authors were beyond question, the looseness with which they are used to prove whatever Hahnemann chooses, is beyond the bounds of credibility. Let me give one instance to illustrate the character of this

\* Cælius Aurel. De Morb. Acut. et Chron. Lib. I. cap. xv. *not* xvi. Amsterdam. Wetstein, 1755.

† Observ. et Curat. Med. Lib. XXI. obs. xiii. Frankfort, 1614.

man's mind. Hahnemann asserts in a note annexed to the 110th paragraph of the *Organon*, that the smell of the rose will cause certain persons to faint. And he says in the text that substances which produce peculiar effects of this nature on particular constitutions, cure the same symptoms in people in general. Then in another note to the same paragraph, he quotes the following fact from one of the last sources one would have looked to for medical information, the Byzantine Historians.

"It was by these means" (i. e. Homœopathically) "that the Princess Eudisia with rose water restored a person who had fainted!"

Is it possible that a man who is guilty of such pedantic folly as this; a man who can see a confirmation of his doctrine in such a recovery as this; a recovery which is happening every day—from a breath of air—a drop or two of water—untying a bonnet string—loosening a stay-lace—and which can hardly help happening, whatever is done; is it possible that a man, of whose pages, not here and there one, but hundreds upon hundreds are loaded with such trivialities, is the Newton, the Columbus, the Harvey of the nineteenth century!

The whole process of demonstration he employs is this. An experiment is instituted with some drug upon one or more healthy persons. Every thing that happens for a number of weeks or days is, as we have seen, set down as an effect of the medicine. Old volumes are then ransacked promiscuously, and every morbid sensation or change, that any body ever said was produced by the drug in question is added to the list of symptoms. By one or both of these methods, each of the sixty-four substances enumerated by Hahnemann is shown to produce a very large number of symptoms, the lowest in his scale being ninety-seven, and the highest fourteen hundred and ninety-one. And having made out this list respecting any drug, a catalogue, which, as you may observe in any Homœopathic manual, contains various symptoms belonging to every organ of the body, what can be easier than to find alleged cures in every medical author which can at once be attributed to the Homœopathic principle; still more if the grave of extinguished credulity is called upon to give up its dead bones as living witnesses; and worst of all, if the monuments of the past are to be mutilated in favor of "the sole law of Nature in therapeutics?"

There are a few familiar facts of which great use has been

made as an entering wedge for the Homœopathic doctrine. They have been suffered to pass current so long that it is time they should be nailed to the counter, a little operation which I undertake with perfect cheerfulness to perform for them.

The first is a supposed illustration of the Homœopathic law, found in the precept given for the treatment of parts that have been frozen, by friction with snow or similar means. But we deceive ourselves by names, if we suppose the frozen part to be treated by cold, and not by heat. The snow may even be actually *warmer* than the part to which it is applied. But even if it were at the same temperature when applied, it never did and never could do the least good to a frozen part, except as a mode of regulating the application of what? of *heat*. But the heat must be applied *gradually*, just as food must be given a little at a time to those perishing with hunger. The patient is commonly brought into a warm room, where heat would be applied *very rapidly*, were not something interposed to prevent this, and allow its gradual admission. Snow or iced water is exactly what is wanted; it is not cold to the part; it is very possibly warm on the contrary, for these terms are relative, and if it does not melt and let the heat in, or is not taken away, the part will remain frozen up until dooms-day.—Now the treatment of a frozen limb by heat, in large or small quantities is not Homœopathy.

The next supposed illustration of the Homœopathic law is the alleged successful management of burns by holding them to the fire. This is a popular mode of treating those burns which are of too little consequence to require any more efficacious remedy, and would inevitably get well of themselves, without any trouble being bestowed upon them. It produces a most acute pain in the part, which is followed by some loss of sensibility, as happens with the eye after exposure to strong light, and the ear after being subjected to very intense sounds. This is all it is capable of doing, and all farther notions of its efficacy must be attributed merely to the vulgar love of paradox. If this example affords any comfort to the Homœopathist, it seems as cruel to deprive him of it as it would be to convince the mistress of the smoke jack or the flat iron, that the fire does not literally “draw the fire out,” which is her hypothesis.

But if it were true that frost-bites were cured by cold and

burns by heat, it would be subversive, so far as it went, of the great principle of Homœopathy. For you will remember that this principle is, that *Like* cures *Like*, and not that *Same* cures *Same*, that there is *resemblance* and not *identity* between the symptoms of the disease and those produced by the drug which cures it, and none have been readier to insist upon this distinction than the Homœopathists themselves. For if *Same* cures *Same*, then every poison must be its own antidote; which is neither a part of their theory, nor their so-called experience. They have been asked, often enough, why it was that arsenic could not cure the mischief that arsenic had caused, and why the infectious cause of small-pox did not remedy the disease it had produced, and then they were ready enough to see the distinction I have pointed out.—Oh no! it was not the hair of the same dog, but only of one very much like him!

A third instance in proof of the homœopathic law is sought for in the acknowledged efficacy of vaccination. And how does the law apply to this? It is granted by the advocates of Homœopathy, that there is a resemblance between the effects of the vaccine virus on a person in health, and the symptoms of small pox. Therefore, according to the rule, the vaccine virus will cure the small pox, which as every body knows is entirely untrue. But it prevents small pox, say the Homœopathists. Yes, and so does small pox prevent itself from ever happening again, and we know just as much of the principle involved in the one case as in the other. For this is only one of a series of facts which we are wholly unable to explain. Small pox, measles, scarlet fever, whooping cough, protect those who have them once from future attacks; but nettle rash, and catarrh, and lung fever, each of which is just as homœopathic to itself as each of the others, have no such preservative power. We are obliged to accept the fact, unexplained, and we can do no more for vaccination than for the rest.

I come now to the most directly practical point connected with the subject, namely:

What is the state of the evidence as to the efficacy of the proper Homœopathic treatment in the cure of diseases?

As the treatment adopted by the Homœopathists has been almost universally by means of the infinitesimal doses, the question of their efficacy is thrown open, in common with that



of the truth of their fundamental axiom, as both are tested in practice.

We must look for facts as to the actual working of Homœopathy to three sources.

1. The statements of the unprofessional public.
2. The assertions of Homœopathic practitioners.
3. The results of trials by competent and honest physicians, not pledged to the system.

I think, after what we have seen of medical facts, as they are represented by incompetent persons, we are disposed to attribute little value to all statements of wonderful cures, coming from those who have never been accustomed to watch the caprices of disease, and have not cooled down their young enthusiasm by the habit of tranquil observation. Those who know nothing of the natural progress of a malady, of its ordinary duration, of its various modes of terminating, of its liability to accidental complications, of the signs which mark its insignificance or severity, of what is to be expected of it when left to itself, of how much or how little is to be anticipated from remedies, those who know nothing or next to nothing of all these things, and who are in a great state of excitement from benevolence, sympathy, or zeal for a new medical discovery, can hardly be expected to be sound judges of facts that have misled so many sagacious men, who have spent their lives in their daily study and observation. I believe that, after having drawn the portrait of defunct Perkinism, with its five thousand printed cures, and its million and a half computed ones, its miracles blazoned about through America, Denmark, and England; after relating, that forty years ago, women carried the Tractors about in their pockets, and workmen could not make them fast enough for the public demand; and then showing you, as a curiosity, a single one of these instruments, an odd one of a pair, which I obtained only by a lucky accident, so utterly lost is the memory of all their wonderful achievements; I believe, after all this, I need not waste time in showing that medical accuracy is not to be looked for in the florid reports of benevolent associations, the assertions of illustrious patrons, the lax effusions of daily journals, or the effervescent gossip of the tea table.

Dr. Hering, whose name is somewhat familiar to the champions of Homœopathy, has said that "the new healing art is not to be judged by its success in isolated cases only, but

according to its success in general, its innate truth, and the incontrovertible nature of its innate principles."

We have seen something of "the incontrovertible nature of its innate principles," and it seems probable, on the whole, that its success in general, must be made up of its success in isolated cases. Some attempts have been made, however, to finish the whole matter by sweeping statistical documents, which are intended to prove its triumphant success over the common practice.

It is well known to those who have had the good fortune to see the *Homœopathic Examiner*, that this journal led off in its first number, with a grand display of every thing the newly imported doctrine had to show for itself. It is well remarked, on the *twenty-third page* of this article, that "the comparison of bills of mortality among an equal number of sick, treated by divers methods, is a most poor and lame way to get at conclusions touching principles of the healing art." In confirmation of which, the author proceeds, upon the *twenty-fifth page*, to prove the superiority of the Homœopathic treatment of cholera, by precisely these very bills of mortality. Now, every intelligent physician is aware, that the poison of cholera differed so much in its activity at different times and places, that it was next to impossible to form any opinion as to the results of treatment, unless every precaution was taken to secure the most perfectly corresponding conditions in the patients treated, and hardly even then. Of course, then, a Russian Admiral, by the name of Mordvinow, backed by a number of so called physicians, practising in Russian villages, is singularly competent to the task of settling the whole question of the utility of this or that kind of treatment; to prove that if not more than eight and a half per cent. of those attacked with the disease perished, the rest owed their immunity to Hahnemann. I can remember when more than a hundred patients in a public institution, were attacked with what, I doubt not, many Homœopathic physicians (to say nothing of Homœopathic admirals,) would have called cholera, and *not one* of them died, though treated in the common way, and it is my firm belief, that if such a result had followed the administration of the omnipotent globules, it would have been in the mouth of every adept in Europe, from Quin of London, to Spohr of Gandersheim. No longer ago than yesterday, in one of the most widely circulated papers of this city, there was published an assertion, that

the mortality in several Homœopathic Hospitals, was not quite five in a hundred, whereas, in what are called by the writer, Allopathic Hospitals, it is said to be eleven in a hundred. An honest man should be ashamed of such an *argumentum ad ignorantiam*. The mortality of a hospital depends not merely on the treatment of the patients, but on the class of diseases it is in the habit of receiving, on the place where it is, on the season, and many other circumstances. For instance, there are many hospitals in the great cities of Europe, that receive few diseases of a nature to endanger life, and, on the other hand, there are others, where dangerous diseases are accumulated out of the common proportion. Thus, in the wards of Louis, at the Hospital of La Pitié, a vast number of patients in the last stages of consumption were constantly entering, to swell the mortality of that hospital. It was because he was known to pay particular attention to the diseases of the chest, that patients laboring under those fatal affections to an incurable extent, were so constantly coming in upon him. It is always a miserable appeal to the thoughtlessness of the vulgar, to allege the naked fact of the less comparative mortality in the practice of one hospital, or of one physician than another, as an evidence of the superiority of their treatment. Other things being equal, it must always be expected that those institutions and individuals enjoying, to the highest degree, the confidence of the community, will lose the largest proportion of their patients; for the simple reason, that they will naturally be looked to by those suffering from the gravest class of diseases; that many, who know that they are affected with mortal disease, will choose to die under their care or shelter, while the subjects of trifling maladies, and mere troublesome symptoms, amuse themselves to any extent among the fancy practitioners. When, therefore, Dr. Muhlenbein, as stated in the Homœopathic Examiner, and quoted in yesterday's Daily Advertiser, asserts that the mortality among his patients is only one per cent. since he has practised Homœopathy, whereas it was six per cent. when he employed the common mode of practice, I am convinced by this, his own statement, that the citizens of Brunswick, whenever they are *seriously* sick, take good care not to send for Dr. Muhlenbein!

It is evidently impossible that I should attempt, within the compass of a single lecture, any detailed examination of the very numerous cases reported in the Homœopathic Treatises

and Journals. Having been in the habit of receiving the French Archives of Homœopathic Medicine, until the premature decease of that Journal, I have had the opportunity of becoming acquainted somewhat with the style of these documents, and experiencing whatever degree of conviction they were calculated to produce. Although of course I do not wish any value to be assumed for my opinion, such as it is, I consider that you are entitled to hear it. So far then, as I am acquainted with the general character of the cases reported by the Homœopathic physicians, they would for the most part be considered as wholly undeserving a place in any English, French, or American periodical of high standing, if instead of favoring the doctrine they were intended to support, they were brought forward to prove the efficacy of any common remedy administered by any common practitioner. There are occasional exceptions to this remark; but the general truth of it is rendered probable by the fact that these cases are always, or almost always written with the single object of showing the efficacy of the medicine used, or the skill of the practitioner, and it is recognised as a general rule that such cases deserve very little confidence. Yet they may sound well enough, one at a time, to those who are not fully aware of the fallacies of medical evidence. Let me state a case in illustration. Nobody doubts that *some* patients recover under every form of practice. Probably all are willing to allow that a large majority, for instance, ninety in a hundred, of such cases as a physician is called to in daily practice, would recover, sooner or later, with more or less difficulty, provided nothing were done to interfere seriously with the efforts of nature.

Suppose then a physician who has a hundred patients prescribes to each of them pills made of some entirely inert substance, as starch, for instance.—Ninety of them get well, or if he chooses to use such language, he cures ninety of them. It is evident according to the doctrine of chances, that there must be a considerable number of coincidences between the relief of the patient and the administration of the remedy. It is altogether probable that there will happen two or three *very striking* coincidences out of the whole ninety cases, in which it would seem evident that the medicine produced the relief, though it had, as we assumed, nothing to do with it. Now suppose that the physician publishes these cases, will they not have a plausible appearance of proving that which,



as we granted at the outset, was entirely false? Suppose that instead of pills of starch he employs microscopic sugar-plums, with the five million billion trillionth part of a suspicion of aconite or pulsatilla, and then publishes his successful cases, through the leaden lips of the press, or the living ones of his female acquaintances—does that make the impression a less erroneous one? But so it is that in Homœopathic works and journals and gossip one can never, or next to never, find any thing but successful cases, which might do very well as a proof of superior skill, did it not prove as much for the swindling advertisers whose certificates disgrace so many of our newspapers. How long will it take mankind to learn that while they listen to “the speaking hundreds and units, who make the world ring” with the pretended triumphs they have witnessed, the “dumb millions” of deluded and injured victims are paying the daily forfeit of their misplaced confidence!

I am sorry to see also that a degree of ignorance as to the natural course of diseases is often shown in these published cases, which, although it may not be detected by the unprofessional reader, conveys an unpleasant impression to those who are acquainted with the subject. Thus a young woman affected with *jaundice* is mentioned in the German Annals of Clinical Homœopathy, as having been cured in twenty-nine days by Pulsatilla and Nux Vomica. Rummel, a well known writer of the same school, speaks of curing a case of jaundice in thirty-four days by Homœopathic doses of pulsatilla, aconite and cinchona. I happened to have a case in my own household, a few weeks since, which lasted about ten days, and this was longer than I have repeatedly seen it in hospital practice, so that it was nothing to boast of.

Dr. Munneche of Lichtenburg in Saxony is called to a patient with sprained ankle who had been a fortnight under the common treatment. The patient gets well by the use of arnica, in a little more than a month longer, and this extraordinary fact is published in the French Archives of Homœopathic Medicine.

In the same journal is recorded the case of a patient who with nothing more, as far as any proof goes, than *influenza*, gets down to her shop upon the sixth day.

And again, the cool way in which every thing favorable in a case is set down by these people entirely to their treatment, may be seen in a case of croup reported in the Homœ-



opathic Gazette of Leipsic, in which leeches, blistering, inhalation of hot vapor, and powerful internal medicine had been employed, and yet the merit was all attributed to one drop of some homœopathic fluid.

I need not multiply these quotations, which illustrate the grounds of an opinion the time does not allow me to justify more at length; other such cases are lying open before me; there is no end to them if more were wanted; for nothing is necessary but to look into any of the numerous broken down Journals of Homœopathy, the volumes of which may be found on the shelves of those curious in such matters.

A number of public trials of Homœopathy have been made in different parts of the world. Six of these are mentioned in the Manifesto of the Homœopathic Examiner.—Now to suppose that any trial can absolutely *silence* people, would be to forget the whole experience of the past. Dr. Haygarth and Dr. Alderson could not stop the sale of the five guinea tractors, although they proved that they could work the same miracles with pieces of wood and tobacco pipe. It takes time for truth to operate as well as for homœopathic globules.—Many persons thought the results of these trials were decisive enough of the nullity of the treatment; those who wish to see the kind of special pleading and evasion by which it is attempted to cover results which, stated by the Homœopathic Examiner itself, look exceedingly like a miserable failure, may consult the opening flourish of that Journal. I had not the intention to speak of these public trials at all; having abundant other evidence on the point. But I think it best on the whole to mention two of them in a few words; that instituted at Naples, and that of Andral.

There have been few names in the medical profession for the last half century so widely known throughout the world of science as that of M. Esquirol, whose life was devoted to the treatment of insanity, and who was without a rival in that department of practical medicine. It is from an analysis communicated by him to the Gazette Médicale de Paris, that I derive my acquaintance with the account of the trial at Naples by Dr. Panvini, physician to the Hospital della Pace. This account seems to be entirely deserving of credit. Ten patients were set apart and not allowed to take any medicine at all,—much against the wish of the Homœopathic physician. All of them got well, and of course all of them would

have been claimed as triumphs if they had been submitted to the treatment.—Six other slight cases (each of which is specified) got well under the homœopathic treatment—none of its asserted specific effects being manifested. All the rest were cases of grave disease, and so far as the trial, which was interrupted about the fortieth day, extended, the patients grew worse or received no benefit. A case is reported on the page before me of a soldier affected with acute inflammation in the chest, who took successively aconite, bryonia, nux vomica and pulsatilla, and after *thirty-eight days* of treatment remained without any important change in his disease. And the homœopathic physician who treated these patients was M. de Horatiis, who had the previous year been announcing his wonderful cures. And M. Esquirol asserted to the Academy of Medicine in 1835, that this M. de Horatiis, who is one of the prominent personages in the Examiner's Manifesto published in 1840, had subsequently renounced Homœopathy. I may remark, by the way, that this same periodical, which is so very easy in explaining away the results of these trials, makes a mistake of only six years or a little more as to the time when this at Naples was instituted.

M. Andral, the "eminent and very enlightened allopathist" of the Homœopathic Examiner, made the following statement in March 1835, to the Academy of Medicine. "I have submitted this doctrine to experiment; I can reckon at this time from one hundred and thirty to one hundred and forty cases, recorded with perfect fairness, in a great hospital, under the eye of numerous witnesses; to avoid every objection I obtained my remedies of M. Guibourt, who keeps a Homœopathic pharmacy, and whose strict exactness is well known; the regimen has been scrupulously observed, and I obtained from the sisters attached to the Hospital, a special regimen, such as Hahnemann orders. I was told however, some months since, that I had not been faithful to all the rules of the doctrine. I therefore took the trouble to begin again; I have studied the practice of the Parisian Homœopaths, as I had studied their books, and I became convinced that they treated their patients as I had treated mine, and I affirm that I have been as rigorously exact in the treatment as any other person."

And he expressly asserts the entire nullity of the influence of all the homœopathic remedies tried by him in modifying, so far as he could observe, the progress or termination of

diseases.—It deserves notice that he experimented with the most boasted substances—cinchona, aconite, mercury, bryonia, belladonna. Aconite, for instance, he says he administered in more than forty cases of that collection of feverish symptoms, in which it exerts so much power, according to Hahnemann, and in not one of them did it have the slightest influence, the pulse and heat remaining as before.

These statements look pretty honest, and would seem hard to be explained away, but it is calmly said that he “did not know enough of the method to select the remedies with any tolerable precision.”\* Who are they that practice Homœopathy, and say this of a man with the *Materia Medica* of Hahnemann lying before him? Who are they that send these same globules, on which he experimented, accompanied by a little book, into families, whose members are thought competent to employ them, when they deny any such capacity to a man whose life has been passed at the bedside of patients, the most prominent teacher in the first Medical Faculty in the world, the consulting physician of the King of France, and one of the most renowned practical writers, not merely of his nation, but of his age? I leave the quibbles by which such persons would try to creep out from under the crushing weight of these conclusions, to the unfortunates who suppose that a *reply* is equivalent to an *answer*.

Dr. Baillie, one of the physicians in the great Hotel Dieu of Paris, invited two Homœopathic practitioners to experiment in his wards. One of these was *Curie*, now of London, whose works are on the counters of some of our bookstores, and probably in the hands of some of my audience. This gentleman, whom Dr. Baillie declares to be an enlightened man, and perfectly sincere in his convictions, brought his own medicines from the pharmacy which furnished Hahnemann himself, and employed them for four or five months, upon patients in his ward, and with results equally unsatisfactory, as appears from Dr. Baillie’s statement, at a meeting of the Academy of Medicine. And a similar experiment was per-

\* Homœopathic Examiner, Vol. I. p. 22.

“Nothing is left to the caprice of the physician. (‘In a word, instead of being dependent upon blind chance, that there is an infallible law, guided by which, the physician *MUST* select the proper remedies.’)” Ibid. in a notice of Menzel’s paper.

mitted by the Clinical Professor of the Hotel Dieu of Lyons, with the same complete failure.

But these are old and prejudiced practitioners. Very well, then take the statement of Dr. Fleury, a most intelligent young physician, who treated homœopathically more than fifty patients, suffering from diseases which it was not dangerous to treat in this way, taking every kind of precaution as to regimen, removal of disturbing influences, and the state of the atmosphere, insisted upon by the most vigorous partisans of the doctrine, and found not the slightest effect produced by the medicines. And more than this, read nine of these cases, which he has published, as I have just done, and observe the absolute nullity of aconite, belladonna and bryonia against the symptoms over which they are pretended to exert such palpable, such obvious, such astonishing influences. In the view of these statements, it is impossible not to realize the entire futility of attempting to silence this asserted science, by the flattest and most peremptory results of experiment. Were every hospital physician of Europe and America to devote themselves, for the requisite period, to this sole pursuit, and were their results to be unanimous as to the total worthlessness of the whole system in practice, this slippery delusion would slide through their fingers without the slightest discomposure, when, as they supposed, they had crushed every joint in its tortuous and trailing body.

3. I have said, that to show the truth of the Homœopathic doctrine, as announced by Hahnemann, it would be necessary to show, in the third place, that remedies never cure diseases when they are not capable of producing similar symptoms. The burden of this somewhat comprehensive demonstration, lying entirely upon the advocates of this doctrine, it may be left to their mature reflections.

It entered into my original plan, to treat of the doctrine relating to *Psora*, or itch—an almost insane conception, which I am glad to get rid of—for this is a subject one does not care to *handle without gloves*. I am saved this trouble, however, by finding that many of the disciples of Hahnemann, those disciples, the very gospel of whose faith stands upon his word, make very light of his authority on this point, although he himself says, “it has cost me twelve years of study

and research, to trace out the source of this incredible number of chronic affections, to discover this great truth, which remained concealed from all my predecessors and contemporaries, to establish the basis of its demonstration, and find out, at the same time, the curative medicines that were fit to combat this hydra in all its different forms."

But, in the face of all this, the following remarks are made by Wolff, of Dresden, whose essays, according to the editor of the *Homœopathic Examiner*, "represent the opinions of a large majority of Homœopathists in Europe."

"It cannot be unknown to any one at all familiar with Homœopathic literature, that Hahnemann's idea of tracing the large majority of chronic diseases to actual itch, has met with the greatest opposition from Homœopathic physicians themselves." And again, "if the Psoric theory has led to no proper schism, the reason is to be found in the fact that it is almost without any influence in practice."

We are told by Jahr, that Dr. Griesselich, "Surgeon to the Grand Duke of Baden," and a "distinguished" homœopathist, actually asked Hahnemann for the *proof* that chronic diseases, such as dropsy, for instance, never arise from any other cause than itch; and that according to common report, the venerable sage was highly incensed (*fort courroucé*) with Dr. Hartmann, of Leipsic, another "distinguished" Homœopathist, for maintaining that they certainly did arise from other causes.

And Dr. Fielitz, in the *Homœopathic Gazette* of Leipsic, after saying, in a good natured way, that Psora is the devil in medicine, and that physicians are divided on this point, into diabolists and exorcists, declares that, according to a remark of Hahnemann, the whole civilized world is affected with Psora. I must therefore disappoint any advocate of Hahnemann, who may honor me with his presence, by not attacking a doctrine, on which some of the disciples of his creed would be very happy to have its adversaries waste their time and strength. I will not meddle with this excrescence, which, though often used in time of peace, would be dropped, like the limb of a shell-fish, the moment it was assailed; time is too precious, and the harvest of living extravagances nods too heavily to my sickle, that I should blunt it upon straw and stubble.

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I will close the subject with a brief examination of some



of the statements made in Homœopathic works, and more particularly in the brilliant Manifesto of the Examiner, before referred to. And first, it is there stated under the head of "Homœopathic Literature," that "SEVEN HUNDRED volumes have been issued from the press developing the peculiarities of the system, and many of them possessed of a scientific character that *savans* know well how to respect." If my assertion were proper evidence in the case, I should declare that having seen a good many of these publications, from the year 1834, when I bought the work of the *Rev.* Thomas Everest,\* to within a few weeks, when I received my last importation of Homœopathic literature, I have found that all, with a very few exceptions, were stitched pamphlets varying from twenty or thirty pages to somewhat less than a hundred, and generally resembling each other as much as so many spelling books.

But not being evidence in the case, I will give you the testimony of Dr. Trinks, of Dresden, who flourishes on the fifteenth page of the same Manifesto as one of the most distinguished among the Homœopathists of Europe. I translate the sentence literally from the Archives de la Médecine Homœopathique.

"The literature of homœopathy, if that honorable name must be applied to all kinds of book making, has been degraded to the condition of the humblest servitude. Productions without talent, without spirit, without discrimination, flat and pitiful eulogies, exaggerations surpassing the limits of the most robust faith, invectives against such as dared to doubt the dogmas which had been proclaimed, or catalogues of remedies; of such materials is it composed! From distance to distance only, have appeared some memoirs useful to science or practice, which appear as so many green oases in the midst of this literary desert."

It is a very natural as well as a curious question to ask, what has been the success of Homœopathy in the different countries of Europe, and what is its present condition.

The greatest reliance of the advocates of Homœopathy is of course on Germany. We know very little of its medical schools, its medical doctrines or its medical men, compared with those of England and France. And, therefore, when

\* Dr. Curie speaks of this silly pamphlet as having been published in 1835.

an intelligent traveller gives a direct account from personal inspection, of the miserable condition of the Homœopathic hospital at Leipsic, the first established in Europe, and the first on the list of the ever-memorable Manifesto, it is easy enough to answer or elude the fact by citing various hard names of "distinguished" practitioners, which sound just as well to the uninformed public as if they were Meckel, or Tiedemann, or Langenbeck. Dr. Leo-Wolf, who, to be sure, is opposed to Homœopathy, but who is a scholar, and ought to know something of his own countrymen, assures us that "Dr. Kopp is the only German Homœopathist, if we can call him so, who has been distinguished as an author and practitioner before he examined this method." And Dr. Lee, the same gentleman in whose travels the paragraph relating to the Leipsic Hospital is to be found, says the same thing. And I will cheerfully expose myself to any impertinent remark which it might suggest, to assure my audience that I never heard or saw one authentic Homœopathic name of any country in Europe, which I had ever heard mentioned before, as connected with medical science by a single word or deed sufficient to make it in any degree familiar to my ears, unless Arnold of Heidelberg is the anatomist that discovered a little body in the cavity of the head, called the otic ganglion. But you need ask no better proof of who and what the German adherents of this doctrine must be, than the testimony of a German Homœopathist, of the wretched character of the works they manufacture to enforce its claims.

As for the act of this or that government tolerating or encouraging Homœopathy, every person of common intelligence knows that it is a mere form granted or denied according to the general principles of policy adopted in different states, or the degree of influence which some few persons who have adopted it may happen to have at court. What may be the value of certain pompous titles with which many of the advocates of Homœopathy are honored, it might be disrespectful to question. But in the mean time, the judicious inquirer may ponder over an extract, which I translate from a paper relating to a personage well known to the community as *Williams the Oculist*, with whom I had the honor of crossing the Atlantic some years since, and who himself handed me two copies of the paper in question.

"To say that he was oculist of Louis XVIII. and of Charles X., and that he now enjoys the same title with respect

to His Majesty, Louis Philippe, and the King of the Belgians, is unquestionably to say a great deal; and yet it is one of the least of his titles to public confidence. His reputation rests upon a basis more substantial even than the numerous diplomas with which he is provided, than the membership of the different medical societies which have chosen him as their associate," etc. etc.

And as to one more point, it is time that the public should fully understand that the common method of supporting barefaced imposture at the present day, both in Europe and in this country, consists in trumping up "Dispensaries," "Colleges of Health," and other advertising charitable clap-traps, which use the poor as decoy ducks for the rich, and the proprietors of which have a strong predilection for the title of "Professor." These names, therefore, have come to be of little or no value as evidence of the good character, still less of the high pretensions of those who invoke their authority. Nor does it follow even when a chair is founded in connexion with a well known institution, that it has either a salary or an occupant; so that it may be, and probably is, a mere harmless piece of toleration on the part of the government if a Professorship of Homœopathy is really in existence at Jena or Heidelberg. And finally, in order to correct the error of any who might suppose that the whole Medical Profession of Germany has long since fallen into the delusions of Hahnemann, I will quote two lines which a celebrated anatomist and surgeon, (whose name will occur again in this lecture in connection with a very pleasing letter,) addressed to the French Academy of Medicine in 1835. "I happened to be in Germany some months since, at a meeting of nearly six hundred physicians; one of them wished to bring up the question of Homœopathy; they would not even listen to him." This may have been very impolite and bigoted, but that is not precisely the point in reference to which I mention the circumstance.

But if we cannot easily get at Germany, we can very easily obtain exact information from France and England. I took the trouble to write some months ago to two friends in Paris in whom I could place confidence, for information upon the subject. One of them answered briefly to the effect that nothing was said about it. When the late Curator of the Lowell Institute, at his request, asked about the works upon the subject, he was told that they had remained a long time on the shelves quite unsaleable, and never spoken of.

The other gentleman, whose name is well known to my audience, and who needs no commendation of mine, had the kindness to procure for me many publications upon the subject, and some information which sets the whole matter at rest, so far as Paris is concerned. He went directly to the Baillières, the principal and almost the only publishers of all the Homœopathic books and journals in that city. The following facts were taken by my correspondent from the account books of this publishing firm. Four Homœopathic Journals have been published in Paris; three of them by the Baillières.

The reception they met with may be judged of by the following list, showing the number of subscribers to each on the books of the publishing firm in Paris during several successive years.

|                                                                                | Year. | Subscribers. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------------|
| 1. <i>Bibliothèque Homœopathique</i> , . . .                                   | 1833  | 129          |
|                                                                                | 1835  | 80           |
|                                                                                | 1837  | 72           |
|                                                                                | 1839  | 55           |
|                                                                                | 1841  | 31           |
| 2. <i>Archives de la Médecine Homœopathique</i> , . . . . .                    | 1834  | 186          |
|                                                                                | 1836  | 175          |
|                                                                                | 1838  | 148          |
| Changed its name to <i>Journal de la Doctrine Hahnemanienne</i> , in . . . . . | 1840  | 114          |
| Ceased to be published.                                                        |       |              |
| 3. <i>Revue Critique et Retrospective de la Matière Médicale</i> , . . . . .   | 1840  | 65           |
|                                                                                | 1841  | 51           |

4. A Review published by some other house, which lasted one year and had about 50 subscribers, appeared in 1834-5.

These are the only four Journals of Homœopathy ever published in Paris. They informed my correspondent that the sale of homœopathic books was much less than formerly, and that consequently they should undertake to publish no new books upon the subject except those of Jahr or Hahnemann. "This man," says my correspondent,—referring to

one of the brothers — “the publisher and head-quarters of Homœopathy in Paris, informs me that it is going down in England and Germany as well as in Paris. For all the facts he had stated he pledged himself as responsible.

Homœopathy was in its prime in Paris, he said, in 1836 and '37, and since then has been going down.

Louis told my correspondent that no person of distinction in Paris had embraced Homœopathy, and that it was declining. If you ask who Louis is, I refer you to the well known Homœopathist, Peschier of Geneva, who says, addressing him, “I respect no one more than yourself; the feeling which guides your researches, your labors, and your pen, is so honorable and rare, that I could not but bow down before it; and I own, if there were any allopathist who inspired me with higher veneration, it would be him and not yourself whom I should address.”

Among the names of “Distinguished Homœopathists,” however, displayed in imposing columns, in the index of the Homœopathic Examiner, are those of MARJOLIN, AMUSSAT, and BRESCHET, names well known to the world of science, and the last of them identified with some of the most valuable contributions which anatomical knowledge has received since the commencement of the present century. One Dr. Croserio,\* who stands sponsor for many *facts* in that journal, makes the following statement among the rest; “Professors, who are esteemed among the most distinguished of the Faculty, (Faculté de l' Ecole de Médecine,) both as to knowledge and reputation, have openly confessed the power of Homœopathia in forms of disease where the ordinary method of practice proved totally insufficient. It affords me the highest pleasure to select from among these gentlemen, Marjolin, Amussat and Breschet”—

Here is a literal translation of an original letter, now in my possession, from one of these Homœopathists to my correspondent.

“ Dear Sir, and respected professional brother,

You have had the kindness to inform me in your letter that a new American Journal, the *New World*,† has made use of

\* This gentleman's distinction is vouched for by Dr. F. Hartmann of Leipsic. Dr. Hartmann's distinction is certified by the editor of the Homœopathic Examiner.

† I first saw M. Breschet's name mentioned in that Journal.



my name in support of the pretended Homœopathic doctrines, and that I am represented as one of the warmest partisans of Homœopathy in France.

I am vastly surprised at the reputation manufactured for me upon the new continent, but I am obliged, in deference to truth, to reject it with my whole energy. I spurn far from me, every thing which relates to that charlatanism called Homœopathy, for these pretended doctrines cannot endure the scrutiny of wise and enlightened persons, who are guided by honorable sentiments in the practice of the noblest of arts.

I am, etc. etc.

G. BRESCHET,

Professor in the Faculty of Medicine,  
Member of the Institute, Surgeon of  
Hotel Dieu, and consulting Surgeon  
of the King, etc.

Paris, 3d November, 1841.

Concerning Amussat, my correspondent writes, that he was informed by Madame Hahnemann, who converses in French more readily than her husband, and therefore often speaks for him, that "he was not a physician, neither Homœopathist nor Allopathist, but that he was the surgeon of their own establishment, that is, performed as a surgeon all the operations they had occasion for in their practice."

I regret not having made any inquiries as to Marjolin, who, I doubt not, would strike his ponderous snuff-box until it resounded like the Grecian horse, at hearing such a doctrine associated with his respectable name. I was not aware, when writing to Paris, that this worthy Professor, whose lectures I long attended, was included in these audacious claims; but after the specimens I have given of the accuracy of the foreign correspondence of the Homœopathic Examiner, any further information I might obtain, would seem so superfluous as hardly to be worth the postage.

Homœopathy may be said, then, to be in a sufficiently miserable condition in Paris. Yet, there lives, and there has lived for years, the illustrious Samuel Hahnemann, who himself assured my correspondent that no place offered the advantages of Paris in its investigation, by reason of the attention there paid to it.

In England, it appears by the statement of Dr. Curie in October, 1839, about eight years after its introduction into the country, that there were eighteen Homœopathic physi-

cians in the United Kingdom, of whom only three were to be found out of London, and that many of these practised Homœopathy in secret.

It will be seen, therefore, that according to the recent statement of one of its leading English advocates, Homœopathy had obtained not quite half as many practical disciples in England, as Perkinism could show for itself in a somewhat less period from the time of its first promulgation in that country.

Dr. Curie's letter, dated London, October 30, 1839, says there is "one in Dublin, Dr. Luther; at Glasgow Dr. Scott." The "distinguished" Croserio writes from Paris, dating October 20, 1839, "On the other hand, Homœopathy is commencing to make an inroad into England by the way of Ireland. At Dublin, distinguished physicians have already embraced the new system, and a great part of the nobility and gentry of that city have emancipated themselves from the English fashion and professional authority."

But the Marquis of Anglesea and Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer patronise Homœopathy; the Queen Dowager Adelaide has been treated by a Homœopathic physician. "Jarley is the delight of the nobility and gentry." "The Royal Family are the patrons of Jarley."

Let me ask if a Marquis and a Knight are better than two Lords, and if the Dowager of Royalty is better than Royalty itself, all of which illustrious dignities were claimed in behalf of Benjamin Douglass Perkins?

But if the balance is thought too evenly suspended in this case, another instance can be given in which the evidence of British noblemen and their ladies is shown to be as valuable in establishing the character of a medical man or doctrine, as would be the testimony of the Marquis of Waterford concerning the present condition and prospects of Missionary enterprise. I have before me an octavo volume of more than four hundred pages, in which, among much similar matter, I find highly commendatory letters from the Marchioness of Ormond, Lady Harriot Kavanagh, the Countess of Buckinghamshire, the Right Hon. Viscount Ingestre, M. P., and the Most Noble, the Marquis of Sligo,—all addressed to "John St. John Long, Esq." a wretched charlatan, twice tried for, and once convicted of manslaughter at the Old Bailey.

This poor creature too, like all of his tribe, speaks of the Medical Profession as a great confederation of bigoted monopolists. He too says, that "If an innovator should appear,

holding out hope to those in despair, and curing disorders which the faculty have recorded as irremediable, he is at once, and without inquiry, denounced as an empiric and an impostor." He, too, cites the inevitable names of Galileo and Harvey, and refers to the feelings excited by the great discovery of Jenner. From the treatment of the great astronomer who was visited with the punishment of other heretics by the ecclesiastical authorities of a catholic country some centuries since, there is no very direct inference to be drawn to the medical profession of the present time. His name should be babbled no longer, after having been placarded for the hundredth time in the pages of St. John Long. But if we are doomed to see constant reference to the names of Harvey and Jenner in every worthless pamphlet containing the prospectus of some new trick upon the public, let us, once for all, stare the facts in the face, and see how the discoveries of these great men were actually received by the medical profession.

In 1628, Harvey published his first work upon the circulation. His doctrines were a complete revolution of the prevailing opinions of all antiquity. They immediately found both champions and opponents; of which last, one only, Riolanus, seemed to Harvey worthy of an answer, on account of his "rank, fame, and learning." Controversy in science, as in religion, was not, in those days, carried on with all the courtesy which our present habits demand, and it is possible that some hard words may have been applied to Harvey, as it is very certain that he used the most contemptuous expressions towards others.

Harvey declares, in his second letter to Riolanus, "since the first discovery of the circulation, hardly a day, or a moment has passed, without my hearing it both well and ill spoken of; some attack it with great hostility, others defend it with high encomiums; one party believe that I have abundantly proved the truth of the doctrine against all the weight of opposing arguments, by experiments, observations and dissections; others think it not yet sufficiently cleared up, and free from objections." Two really eminent Professors, Plempius of Louvain, and Walæus of Leyden, were among its early advocates.

The opinions sanctioned by the authority of long ages, and the names of Hippocrates and Galen, dissolved away, gradually, but certainly, before the demonstrations of Harvey.

Twenty-four years after the publication of his first work, and six years before his death, his bust in marble was placed in the Hall of the College of Physicians, with a suitable inscription recording his discoveries.

Two years after this, he was unanimously invited to accept the Presidency of that body ; and he lived to see his doctrine established, and all reputable opposition withdrawn.

There were many circumstances connected with the discovery of Dr. Jenner which were of a nature to excite repugnance and opposition. The practice of inoculation for the small-pox had already disarmed that disease of many of its terrors. The introduction of a contagious disease from a brute creature into the human system, naturally struck the public mind with a sensation of disgust and apprehension, and a part of the medical public may have shared these feelings. I find that Jenner's discovery of vaccination was made public in June, 1798. In July of the same year, the celebrated surgeon, Mr. Cline, vaccinated a child with virus received from Dr. Jenner, and in communicating the success of this experiment, he mentions that Dr. Lister, formerly of the Small Pox Hospital, and himself, are convinced of the efficacy of the cow-pox. In November of the same year, Dr. Pearson published his "Inquiry," containing the testimony of numerous practitioners in different parts of the kingdom, to the efficacy of the practice. Dr. HAYGARTH, who was so conspicuous in exposing the follies of Perkinism, was among the very earliest to express his opinion in favor of vaccination. In 1801, Dr. Lettsom mentions the circumstance "as being to the honor of the medical professors, that they have very generally encouraged this salutary practice, although it is certainly calculated to lessen their pecuniary advantages by its tendency to extirpate a fertile source of professional practice."

In the same year, the Medical Committee of Paris spoke of vaccination in a public letter, as "the most brilliant and most important discovery of the eighteenth century." The Directors of a Society for the Extermination of the Small Pox, in a Report dated October 1st, 1807, "congratulate the public on the very favorable opinion which the Royal College of Physicians of London, after a most minute and laborious investigation made by the command of his majesty, have *a second time* expressed on the subject of vaccination, in their Report laid before the House of Commons, in the

last session of Parliament; in consequence of which the sum of twenty thousand pounds was voted to Dr. Jenner, as a remuneration for his discovery, in addition to ten thousand pounds before granted." (In June 1802.)

These and similar accusations, so often brought up against the Medical Profession, are only one mode in which is manifested a spirit of opposition not merely to medical science, but to all science, and to all sound knowledge. It is a spirit which neither understands itself nor the object at which it is aiming. It gropes among the loose records of the past, and the floating fables of the moment, to glean a few truths or falsehoods tending to prove, if they prove anything, that the persons who have passed their lives in the study of a branch of knowledge the very essence of which must always consist in long and accurate observation, are less competent to judge of new doctrines in their own department than the rest of the community. It belongs to the clown in society, the destructive in politics, and the rogue in practice.

The name of Harvey, whose great discovery was the legitimate result of his severe training and patient study, should be mentioned only to check the pretensions of presumptuous ignorance. The example of Jenner, who gave his inestimable secret, the result of twenty-two years of experiment and researches, unpurchased to the public,—when, as was said in Parliament, he might have made a hundred thousand pounds by it as well as any smaller sum,—should be referred to only to rebuke the selfish venders of secret remedies, among whom his early history obliges us reluctantly to record Samuel Hahnemann. Those who speak of the great body of physicians as if they were united in a league to support the superannuated notions of the past against the progress of improvement, have read the history of medicine to little purpose. The prevalent failing of this profession has been, on the contrary, to lend a too credulous ear to ambitious and plausible innovators. If at the present time ten years of public notoriety have passed over any doctrine professing to be of importance in medical science, and if it has not succeeded in raising up a powerful body of able, learned, and ingenious advocates for its claims, the fault must be in the doctrine and not in the medical profession.

Homœopathy has had a still more extended period of trial than this, and we have seen with what results. It only remains to throw out a few conjectures as to the particular manner in which it is to break up and disappear.



1. The confidence of the few believers in this delusion will never survive the loss of friends who may die of any acute disease, under a treatment such as that prescribed by Homœopathy. It is doubtful how far cases of this kind will be trusted to its tender mercies, but wherever it acquires any considerable foothold, such cases must come, and with them the ruin of those who practise it, should any highly valued life be thus sacrificed.

2. After its novelty has worn out, the ardent and capricious individuals who constitute the most prominent class of its patrons, will return to visible doses, were it only for the sake of a change.

3. The Semi-Homœopathic practitioner will gradually withdraw from the rotten half of his business and try to make the public forget his connection with it.

4. The ultra Homœopathist will either recant and try to rejoin the medical profession; or he will embrace some newer and if possible equally extravagant doctrine; or he will stick to his colors and go down with his sinking doctrine. *Very few will pursue the course last mentioned.*

A single fact may serve to point out in what direction there will probably be a movement of the dissolving atoms of Homœopathy. On the 13th page of the too frequently cited Manifesto of the Examiner, I read the following stately paragraph.

"Bigelius, M. D., physician to the Emperor of Russia, whose elevated reputation is well known in Europe, has been an acknowledged advocate of Hahnemann's doctrines for several years. He abandoned Allopathia for Homœopathia." The date of this statement is January 1840. I find on looking at the booksellers' catalogues that one Bigel or Bigelius, to speak more classically, has been at various times publishing Homœopathic books for some years.

Again, on looking into the Encyclographie des Sciences Médicales for April 1840, I find a work entitled "Manual of HYDROSUDOPATHY, or the treatment of diseases by cold water, etc. etc. by Dr. Bigel, physician of the School of Strasburg, Member of the Medico-chirurgical Institute of Naples, of the Academy of St. Petersburg — assessor of the college of the empire of Russia, physician of his late Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Constantine, chevalier of the Legion of Honor, etc." *Hydrosudopathy* or *Hydropathy*, as it is sometimes called, is a new medical doctrine or practice which has sprung

up in Germany since Homœopathy, which it bids fair to drive out of the market, if, as Dr. Bigel says, fourteen physicians afflicted with diseases which defied themselves and their colleagues came to Graefenberg, in the year 1836 alone, and were cured. Now Dr. Bigel, "whose elevated reputation is well known in Europe," writes as follows: "The reader will not fail to see in this defence of the curative method of Graefenberg, a profession of medical faith, and he will be correct in so doing." And his work closes with the following sentence, worthy of so distinguished an individual; "We believe with religion that the water of baptism purifies the soul from its original sin; let us believe also, with experience, that it is for our corporeal sins the redeemer of the human body."—If Bigel, physician to the late Grand Duke Constantine, is identical with Bigel, whom the Examiner calls physician to the Emperor of Russia, it appears that he is now actively engaged in throwing cold water at once upon his patients and the future prospects of Homœopathy.

If, as must be admitted, no one of Hahnemann's doctrines is received with tolerable unanimity among his disciples, except the central axiom, *Similia similibus curantur*; if this axiom itself relies mainly for its support upon the folly and trickery of Hahnemann, what can we think of those who announce themselves ready to relinquish all the accumulated treasures of our art, to trifle with life upon the strength of these fantastic theories? What shall we think of professed practitioners of medicine, if, in the words of Jahr, "from ignorance, for their personal convenience, or through charlatanism, they treat their patients one day Homœopathically and the next Allopathically;" if they parade their pretended new science before the unguarded portion of the community; if they suffer their names to be coupled with it wherever it may gain a credulous patient; and deny all responsibility for its character, refuse all argument for its doctrines, allege no palliation for the ignorance and deception interwoven with every thread of its flimsy tissue, when they are questioned by those competent to judge and entitled to an answer?

Such is the pretended science of Homœopathy, to which you are asked to trust your lives and the lives of those dearest to you. A mingled mass of perverse ingenuity, of tinsel erudition, of imbecile credulity, and of artful misrepresentation, too often mingled in practice, if we may trust the authority of its founder, with heartless and shameless imposition. Because it is suffered so often to appeal unanswered to the public, because it has its journals, its patrons, its apostles, some are weak enough to suppose it can escape the inevitable doom of utter disgrace and oblivion. Not many years can pass away before the same curiosity excited by one of Perkins's Tractors will be awakened at the sight of one of the Infinitesimal Globules. If it should claim a longer existence it can only be by falling into the hands of the sordid wretches who wring their bread from the cold grasp of disease and death in the hovels of ignorant poverty.

As one humble member of a profession that for more than two thousand years has devoted itself to the pursuit of the best earthly interests of mankind, always assailed and insulted from without by such as are ignorant of its infinite perplexities and labors, always striving in unequal contest with the hundred-armed giant who walks in the noonday, and sleeps not in the midnight, yet still toiling, not merely for itself and the present moment, but for the race and the future, I have lifted my voice against this lifeless delusion, rolling its shapeless bulk into the path of a noble science it is too weak to strike, or to injure.











